

T H E  
Christian Religion  
FOUNDED ON  
REASON:  
O R,  
TWO ESSAYS  
O N  
Natural and Revealed  
RELIGION:  
W I T H

Some Particular CONSIDERATIONS on the  
Doctrines of the TRINITY, the FALL, the  
RESURRECTION and ETERNAL PUNISH-  
MENT: Tending to demonstrate, not only that  
the *Christian Revelation* is Divine, but that it is  
the Only Publick Divine Revelation, which is  
now entirely in Force; and likewise to prove,  
that some of those Doctrines which have been  
thought to furnish the most considerable Ob-  
jections against it, are to be regarded as so many  
Arguments in it's Favour.

[*by Sam. Collier*] K

By the Author of the *Impartial Enquiry*  
*into the Existence and Nature of God.*

---

*Credo quia [non] impossibile est.*

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L O N D O N :

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St. Paul's Church-Yard, J. CLARK and R. HETT, in the  
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THE  
Christian Religion  
FOUNDED ON  
REASON:  
OR  
TWO ESSAYS  
ON  
Natural and Revealed  
RELIGION:



Some Particulars of the  
Doctrines of the Trinity, the Fall, the  
Resurrection, and Eternal Punish-  
ment: Tending to demonstrate, not only that  
the Christian Religion is Divine, but that it is  
the Only Rational Divine Religion, which is  
now entirely in force; and likewise to prove,  
that some of those Doctrines which have been  
thought to diminish the most considerable Op-  
position against it, are to be regarded as so many  
Arguments in its Favour.

By the Author of the Inquiry  
into the Evidence and Nature of God.

LONDON:

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# THE PREFACE.



*I* was not till after very serious Reflections, that I resolved, some Years since, to publish An Impartial Enquiry into the Existence and Nature of GOD. I was apprehensive that what I was about to propose (though with the utmost Submission) concerning the Philosophical Opinion of an Absolute or Positive Infinity, might prove shocking to some good People, to whom it was not my Intention to give the least Occasion of Of-

## The PREFACE.

*sence. But the Desire to promote what appeared to be the Interest of Truth and Religion, prevailing over that and all other Considerations, induced me, at last, to communicate the Remarks I had made during a long Course of Thinking. And as the Love of Truth (if I may be allowed to say it) was ever my predominant Passion, I doubt not but I shall be much more ready to retract than I was to publish, whenever it can be made appear to be for the Interest of Truth.*

*The following Essays, as they owe their Being to the same Cause, so they plead the same Excuse with the mentioned Enquiry. The Christian Revelation has ever seemed to me to be so very Valuable a Part of Truth, that I could not but think it agreeable to the Character of a Lover of Truth to shew his Good-will, at least, by appearing in its Defence, when openly attack'd and insulted. But as divers Learned Pens were engaged in Clearing the External Proofs of Christianity, I chiefly applied myself to set its Internal Evidence in as full a View as possible by discovering its Reasonableness. For it was ever my Opinion, that no greater Service could be done to any Scheme of Religion than to demonstrate*

## The PREFACE.

*demonstrate it's Agreeableness to Reason. In attempting this, I had the Satisfaction to find myself considerably assisted by certain Principles contained in the Enquiry.*

*I thought it not improper to premise a short Sketch of Natural Religion, wherein it is my Endeavour to shew not only how far unassisted Reason has actually led Men in that Part of it which immediately regards God, but likewise how far it might have led them, if duly attended to. By this Means I propose more clearly to demonstrate both the Agreement of Christianity with Natural Religion, and it's Advantages above it. The Whole is cast into a Method adapted to prove the Neglect of the Practice of Religion to be the worst of Ingratitude.*

*The Scheme of the Trinity, which is inserted in the Essay on Revealed Religion, and for which a Foundation was laid in the Enquiry, is humbly proposed to the Consideration of such who being, perhaps justly, prejudiced against the Arian, Semi-Arian and other Schemes, yet cannot come entirely into that which is esteemed the Orthodox Opinion, and who, for that Reason, are in Danger of*



## THE PREFACE.

*entertaining ill Thoughts of the Christian Revelation.*

*As some Complaints have been made of Obscurity with regard to Two Arguments, proposed in the Enquiry as Proofs of the Divine Nature's including All Possible Perfections, and of it's being but One. I persuade myself that an Explanation of those Arguments (which seem to me to be both of them New, and to carry with them a demonstrative Evidence) will not be unacceptable to the Reader.*

*The Proof of the Divine Nature's including All Possible Perfections, may, 'tis conceived, be cleared by the following Propositions:*

No Being can exist with an Absolute or Independent, Eternal Necessity, but such an One whose Nature or Essence absolutely excludes the very Possibility of ceasing to Be; or whose ceasing to Be is an Absolute Impossibility or Contradiction.

But no Nature or Essence can absolutely exclude the very Possibility of ceasing to Be, unless it absolutely excludes

## The P R E F A C E.

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cludes All Possible Imperfection. The Reason is, because wherever any Imperfection either actually is, or is possible to be, there it can be no Absolute Impossibility or Contradiction for any other (and even the Utmost) Imperfection to be likewise. And consequently, there must be a Possibility of ceasing to Be; for as much as the Utmost Imperfection is the Want of all Perfection, or a total Privation of Being itself.

Therefore since the very Nature or Essence of an Absolutely Necessary Being, excludes the very Possibility of ceasing to Be, it can be for no other Reason than because it absolutely excludes All Possible Imperfections.

But that Being whose Nature or Essence absolutely excludes All Possible Imperfections, cannot but possess or include All Possible Perfections. The Reason is, because the Want of any possible Kind or Degree of Perfection, is an Imperfection.

The Proof of the Unity of God, may be thus explained :

A 4

Every

## The PREFACE.

Every Being must have (if not a Cause, yet) a Reason of it's Existence.

The Reason of the Existence of an Absolutely Necessary Being is included in it's own Essence, and is (as was proved) the Utmost Possible Perfection.

Perfection is One and Uniform; *i. e.* All Possible Perfections agree in One common Uniform Nature, or they agree in the General Nature and Notion of Goodness; which admits of no Inconsistence or Contrariety.

Since All Possible Perfections agree in One common Nature which admits of no Inconsistence or Contrariety, they could not necessarily require more than One Original Subject; or (which is the same) they could not be a Necessary Reason of the Existence of more than One Eternal or Necessary Being.

Therefore to suppose more than One Eternal or Necessarily-existent Being, is to suppose Necessary Existence without a Necessary Reason of it: Which is no less an Absurdity than it would be to suppose an Effect without a Cause.

By



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By the First of these Arguments, I think it plainly appears, that the Existence and Perfection of the Divine Being is not founded on a Sort of External Unlimited Necessity, to be supposed as antecedent in Order of Nature \* to it's Existence, but that, on the contrary, the Necessity of it's Existence (which is no more than a Mode or Manner of it's Existence, and therefore ought not to be conceived, in any Sense, as antecedent to it) is founded on it's own Internal Perfection. I the rather take Notice of this, because the Supposition of such an Absolutely Unlimited, and, as it were, Antecedent Necessity (from which some derive their main Proof of an Absolute Infinity) leads directly to Pantheism, or tends to oblige us with Spinoza (who likewise supposed such an Absolutely Unlimited Necessity as a Support to his Absolutely Infinite Nature) to infer that all Action, as well as Existence, is absolutely necessary. For 'tis plain that an Independent and Absolutely Unlimited Necessity cannot be confined or limited to the Divine Existence, but must extend itself likewise to the Divine Action, and even to our own both  
Existence

\* See Answers to Letters at the End of the Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God; p. 36, 37.

## The PREFACE.

*Existence and Action. But this Inference would deprive us of the Subject on which we are going to treat, by destroying the very Notion of Religion.*

*It must likewise be observed, that this Argument leads us to discover that Particular Perfection which is to be conceived as the most immediate Reason of Etenal or Absolutely Necessary Existence and of all other Perfections \*. For it is not difficult to perceive, that Imperfection infers a Possibility of ceasing to Be, no otherwise than as it presupposes Impotence. From whence it's obvious to conclude, that where there is no Possibility of ceasing to Be (i. e. where there is an Absolute Necessity of Existence) there can be no Kind or Degree of Impotence, or there must be Omnipotence, and that where there is Omnipotence there can be no Imperfection, or (which is the same) there must be All Perfection.*

*The Two foregoing Arguments do likewise absolutely subvert the entire System of Spinoza, which supposes the Eternity of Matter. For as they prove there*

\* See the Impartial Enquiry, p. 169.



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there is but One Eternal or absolutely Necessary Being, so they likewise prove (as might easily be shewn) that the One Eternal Being in it's Entire Substance, without Distinction of Parts, contains All Possible Perfections: Whereas, 'tis plain (whatever Spinoza may have pretended to the contrary) that Matter is not One but Many Beings, and that among those Many Beings, there is none that includes or possesses All Possible Perfections; none that is not in some respect Imperfect. Therefore, as neither any Part of Matter, nor even it's whole Mass, can be that One Substance which is the Subject of All Possible Perfections, Matter must, by Consequence, be a Created, Dependent Nature.

'Tis further demonstrable from the same Principles, that the Substratum or Subject of All Possible Perfections must be a Substance which is Unbounded and Indivisible, and which, by Consequence, penetrates, pervades and comprehends the Whole Material System, being Itself comprehended by nothing.

To Conclude: I submit whatever is here or elsewhere proposed, to the Impartial Judgment and Favourable Interpretation

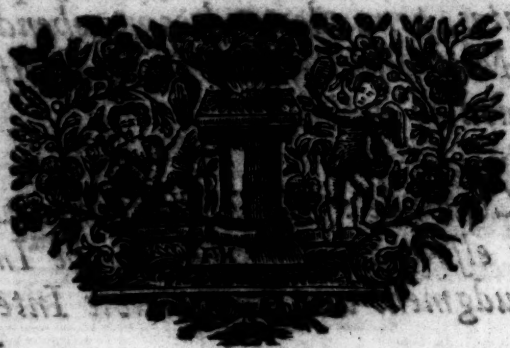


## The PREFACE.

*tation of all sincere Lovers of Truth; not doubting of their Excuse for what may appear to have been said amiss with an honest Design, nor of their Approbation and Patronage in Case any Thing shall be found agreeable to Scripture and sound Reason.*

*That the following Essays may meet with Success, no farther than as they are subservient to the Cause of Truth, is the hearty Wish of the Author.*

S. COLLIBER.



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## SECT. I.

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THE

*Errata, Page 91, Line 28. read of One, and l. 30, r. or Quality. p. 115. l. 24. r. Rom. Ch. 5. l. 28. r. Disobedience, and l. 30. for pear r. clear.*



THE  
*Christian Religion*  
FOUNDED UPON  
REASON.

---

PART I.  
*Of Natural Religion.*

SECT. I.



There are Two different PART  
Ways by which we may I.  
be supposed to arrive at  
some Knowledge of the  
Divine Nature and Will,  
*viz.* Either by the Exercise of our  
Natural Faculties, or by some Super-  
natural Revelation: So Religion is  
usually divided into *Natural* and *Re-  
vealed*.

By *Natural Religion*, is meant our  
Obligation to believe and practice such  
B Things



## Of Natural Religion.

PART Things as Reason (or the Light of  
 I. Nature) is capable of discovering with  
 ~~~~~ Regard to the Nature and Will of  
 God. By *Revealed Religion*, is under-  
 stood our Obligation to believe and  
 practice such Things as may appear to  
 have been discovered by some authen-  
 tick Supernatural Revelation concern-  
 ing the Divine Nature and Will.

As all *Obligation* supposes some  
*Law*, and every Law a Dependance  
 on some Superiour Will; so such O-  
 bligation as constitutes what we call  
*Religion* (whether *Natural* or *Re-  
 vealed*) supposes a Dependance on the  
 Laws and Will of God, (*viz.* a most  
 Powerful, Wise, Just, Beneficent and  
 Free Being) who Created, Preserves,  
 and Governs the World: Of whose  
 Existence and Perfections, we have  
 treated elsewhere.

All *Laws* (properly speaking) as  
 they suppose a Dependance on some  
 Superior Will; so they suppose not  
 only *Reason*, but *Liberty* or a Freedom  
 of Will in their Subjects.

That Men are naturally possessed of  
*Reason* (or a Faculty of inferring one  
 Thing from another) is what no Man  
 can dispute without demonstrating it  
 at the same time. And that they have  
 a *Liberty* of Action in the compleatest  
 Sense,

Sense, is, what they cannot but be con-  
scious of, if they carefully reflect on  
what passes within their own Minds;  
where they may observe a certain vital  
Spring of Action, or a Power not only  
of determining their Thoughts to the  
Consideration of Objects with a View to  
Practice, but of deliberating about them,  
and also of suspending and varying both  
their Choice and Practice, without any  
further balancing, even after the exact-  
est Deliberation, and truest Judgment.  
But Consciousness (or the inward Sen-  
sation which assures them of the Real-  
ity of such a vital Principle of Action)  
is as good a Proof as they can produce  
of the Reality, even of their Existence  
(or of their very Beings.) The Argu-  
ment made use of to prove that Men  
(like certain Machines) are always ne-  
cessarily determined by somewhat ex-  
ternal, is best answered by exerting  
this free, internal, vital Principle, as  
Zeno's Argument against the Possibility  
of Motion was most effectually confu-  
ted by Motion.

The genuine *Dictates of Reason* are  
always to be reputed as declarative of  
the Divine Nature and Will, or as *Di-  
vine Laws*. For Reason being most  
fitly qualified to be a Rule of Ac-  
tion, and the most Wise Creator ha-



PARTING (as we may be assured) given no

I. Qualification in vain, we may conclude it was actually designed by Him to be such a Rule. Now, the genuine Dictates of Reason, being necessary Truths founded on the Divine Nature and the natural and immutable Relations of Things (which Truths we may be assured were ever agreeable to the Divine Understanding and Will) are therefore called *the Laws of Nature*: And the Believing and Practising in Conformity to those Dictates with a Regard to what is True and Right (or agreeable to the Understanding and Will of God) and False and Wrong (or disagreeable thereto) must by Consequence be acting according to *Natural Religion*.

Our Obligation to obey the Laws of Nature (or any other authentick Discoveries of the Divine Will) is not founded merely on the *Power* of God, but chiefly on his *Beneficence* or *Goodness* discoverable to us by the Benefits received from him. This is the more proper Obligation of Intelligent Beings, or that which is both more suitable to our Reasonable Nature, and gives greater Scope for the Exercise of Liberty. But as the Benefits for which we are obliged to the Divine Goodness are no less



Of Natural Religion.

less than our very Beings, and whatever else we enjoy, they cannot but render our Obligation to obey the Dictates of Reason or the Laws of Nature (since they are necessary and immutable) incapable of Dissolution, without the Dissolution of our very Beings on which it depends.

SECT. II.

NOTWITHSTANDING that Reason, which is the immediate natural Rule of our Actions, is universal, yet we cannot find that its Dictates have been at any Time observed pure and unmix'd by any Nation or considerable Body of Men. For though *religious Worship* is a plain and very general Dictate of Reason, yet all Nations appear to have agreed that the Method of Worship was not to be prescribed by their own Reason, but by the Deity to whom it was address'd. So that Revelation, either real or pretended, seems to have been the Foundation of all the ancient Models of religious Worship. And whatever Sentiments were entertained by those Few who afterwards distinguish'd themselves by the Study of Philosophy, 'tis certain they usually conformed to the religious Customs (however absurd or unreasonable)

**PART** which were established in the Countries where they lived.

**I.** So general an Inclination of Mankind to distrust their Faculties, and to depend on Extraordinary Revelation, may seem somewhat strange to such who measure every Age by the present. But whoever rightly considers the Original State of the World, will be no longer surpris'd at it.

'Tis not to be doubted, that the first Planters of Countries had other Employment than to retire and give themselves up to Speculation. We know that the Appetites which depend on the Body, are usually more importunate than those of the Mind, and that the strongest Bent of our Nature is that which inclines us to supply the Necessaries, and guard against the Inconveniencies of Life. We may therefore believe it was a considerable Time e'er Men would suffer themselves to be diverted from their Husbandry and the other Arts of Living to study the Art of Reasoning. This could not but tend by Degrees to a State of Barbarity: Which we need not however suppose to have at any Time prevailed so far as entirely to extinguish the Notion of a God; a Notion which they had questionless received from Tradition, and which a moderate

moderate Degree of Thinking was sufficient to confirm in their Minds. But since a particular Discovery of the Nature and Will of God by the Use of Reason, was a Work of Difficulty, and therefore in those Circumstances not likely to be attempted with Success, 'tis reasonable to think, that the mere Belief of the Existence of a Being, whom they, possibly, conceived as at a Distance and regardless of humane Affairs, made but very weak Impressions on their Minds, and had little or no Influence on their Actions. Hence, we may conclude, sprung not only the Neglect of Religious Worship, but likewise the Contentions, Violence and Confusion which had so early a Growth in the World. For no Wonder if Men free from the Restraints of Religion, and unacquainted with invisible Terrors, measured Right by Power and Appetite, to the Destruction of Property, and the Disturbance of Society. To remedy these Inconveniencies by striking an universal Fear into the Minds of the ignorant unthinking Multitude, nothing, it seems, was judged so effectual as either the real or the pretended Interposition of the Deity. Accordingly, we read that the first Introducers, or Restorers, of a set-



**PART** tled Model of Religious Worship and

**I.**

that they received their Institutions and Laws from some Divine Being. Thus, tho' Fear made not the Gods, as the *Epicurean* Poet, without sufficient Reason affirmed it to have done; yet it appears to have had considerable Influence on the Introduction, or rather Revival of Religion and Civility in many Parts of the World.

But by whatever Methods the Practice of Religion was introduced, or revived, in the more early and barbarous Times, it failed not to recommend it self (in its general Notion at least) to the universal Reason of Mankind in the most polite Ages. Which is a sufficient Argument, that Nature, and not Artifice alone, had disposed Men to acknowledge and adore some Superior Being. For though all the ancient Schemes of Religion may seem to have derived their Original from some Revelation, either real or pretended, whereby either the Deity communicated his Will to his Creatures, or else the first Lawgivers of particular Nations prescribed what themselves thought most conducive to their secular and politick Ends, yet certainly there are such Things as *Natural Theology*

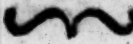
logy and Religion; whatever Socinus, PART  
and some of his Followers, (the better I.  
to recommend their favourite Opini-  
on) may have pretended to the con-  
trary. For as a Man's Reason, either  
by reflecting on himself, or attending  
to the Objects that surround him, di-  
rectly leads him to the Knowledge of  
a God, (or most Perfect Being) so the  
same Reason (as we hinted) may que-  
stionless assist him to form a compe-  
tent Idea of those particular Perfecti-  
ons of the Divine Nature, from which  
the Duties of *Natural Religion* may be  
deduced by Consequences sufficiently  
clear and evident.

SECT. III.

THO' the Name of GOD, in al-  
most every Nation, was usually no o-  
ther than an honorary Title, given in-  
differently to whatever excelled in any  
Kind, yet we find it was not seldom  
appropriated (even by remote Anti-  
quity) to One Eternal or Uncaused  
Being, to whom that and all other  
Names and Titles of Supreme Majesty  
were conceived originally and proper-  
ly to belong, and who was asserted to  
be *the Common Father both of Gods and  
Men.*

Whether

PART Whether this Doctrine of *One Eter-*

I.  nal, or Uncaused and Independent Being, was a pure Dictate of Reason, grounded on the Nature of the Thing, or whether it was a traditional Notion (either borrowed from the *Jews* or handed down from the first Ages of the World) may admit of Dispute. But the latter Supposition appears to have the greater Share of Probability. For tho' (as was shewn in the *Preface*) the Unity of God admits of a sufficient Proof from Reason, yet Antiquity doth not seem to have been acquainted with that Proof; nor perhaps with any other Argument that could be depended on. To this Purpose 'tis observable, that *Plato* informs us of a certain *Παλαιὸς Λόγος*, or ancient Tradition, from which he confesses that he learned much \*. And he assures us, that he had received a Tradition concerning One Eternal Being from *the Ancients, who, says he, were nearer the Gods and more beloved than the Greeks* †.

Of this One Eternal Being we find that the Wisest of the Philosophers were fully agreed to speak in the sublimest Manner possible. They ascribed to Him Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience,

\* Lib. III. *De Legibus*.

† In *Philebo*.



Omniscience, Wisdom and Immutability, together with the Moral Perfections of the most consummate Beneficence, Justice and Providence: Which Perfections are the Foundation of all those Expressions of the deepest Veneration which are wont to come under the Notion of *Religious Worship*. PART I.

That these and all other possible Perfections cannot but belong to the One Eternal or Absolutely Necessary Being, has, 'tis hoped, been firmly demonstrated in the *Preface* and (more particularly) in the *Impartial Inquiry*.

## SECT. IV.

A SETTLED Persuasion of the Eternal or Absolutely Necessary Existence of One Onely Being, whose Nature necessarily includes all Kinds and Degrees of Perfection, and who, by Consequence, was the Creator, and still is the Preserver and Governor of all other Beings, which had no necessary or eternal Existence, and whose Natures contain no necessary Perfection, cannot fail of having a very sensible Influence on the Minds of Men, by exciting not only their *Admiration*, but their *Love*, *Hope* and *Fear*. These, as far as cherished by the Will, and governed by Reason, may be rank'd among Moral

PART I. **ra**l Acts, or Acts of Religion; though otherwise they are to be considered as merely natural Acts, necessarily resulting from the very Constitution of our Beings. For 'tis no Object of our Choice whether we will admire a Being who so inconceivably transcends the Imperfection of our own Nature; and no Man, I am persuaded, makes it the Subject of his Deliberation, whether he shall love the most Consummate Goodness, or fear the most Impartial Justice. These Passions or Affections of the Mind as necessarily follow the firm Belief of such a Being, as the Descent of Bodies follows the Impression of Gravity. But frequently to contemplate the Divine Perfections in order to the raising and invigorating our Admiration, Love, Hope and Fear, and diligently to employ our Reason in directing and governing them, must be allowed to be the Result of Liberty and a religious Disposition of Mind.

Among the Passions or Affections which we have observed to be excited by reflecting on the transcendent Properties of the Divine Being, 'tis remarkable there is but One which immediately inclines to Speculation, *viz.* Admiration; but Three that have an immediate Influence on the Practice, *viz.*

*viz.* Love, Hope and Fear: The first PART  
of which may be said to be as the I.  
Foundation, and the two last as the Cement of practical Religion.

These Affections chiefly derive their Efficacy from our considering the Deity in a relative Capacity. For tho' the Divine Perfections considered as they are in themselves, cannot fail of exciting not only our highest Admiration, but even some Degrees of our Love and Esteem; yet they would have none or but very little Influence on our Conduct, if not considered in Relation to us.

*Gratitude* (which is Love heighten'd by the Sense of Obligation) derived from considering the Deity with Relation to ourselves, as our Creator and Preserver, is the most noble Principle of religious Practice; and the Acts which proceed chiefly from thence, cannot but be the most acceptable, as being more free and disinterested than those which chiefly proceed from the Principles of Hope and Fear. For every Man that is inclined to do well either by Hope of Reward or Fear of Punishment, is not so forward to do so in Return for Favours or Benefits received. Somewhat of a Prospect towards future Interest, may indeed be commonly



**PART** commonly observed to lie at the Roots

**I.** of the Virtues; the Good that we do being usually with a View to future Advantage, either by obtaining some Benefit, or avoiding some Inconvenience or Unhappiness: But the more our Practice springs from and is influenced by the Principle of Gratitude for past and present Favours, the more acceptable it is to our Great Benefactor; as will be shewn. By Consequence, whatever Things are apt to work so strongly on our Fears as to exclude the Exercise of Gratitude (such as Plagues, Earthquakes, Thunderbolts and other present Evils) would have been very unfit to be made the ordinary Means of exciting Men to religious Practice.

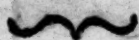
And as Gratitude is the most noble Principle of religious Practice, so it is the firmest Band of Civil Society; which is chiefly maintained by a mutual Sense of Benefits and Obligations. Consequently, the Enemies of Religion (which will be made appear to be our Obligation to the free and most solemn Exercise of Gratitude) can be no true Friends to Government.

But since Men are too apt to become so stupid and unthinking as to be very little sensible of their Obligations both to the Author of their  
Beings,

Beings, and to each other, it has therefore been so ordered by the Divine Wisdom, that the Advantages and Disadvantages in Life, should be for the most Part so unequally shared by Good and Bad Men, as to give us (if we carefully exercise our Reason) no obscure Intimation of such a future State of equal Retribution by Rewards and Punishments, as is most fit to influence both our *Hopes* and *Fears*. These, tho' not so noble Principles, nor so acceptable to God as Gratitude, are certainly very conducive to the Interest of Mankind, by keeping such within the Bounds of Reason and Duty, whom the Sense of Divine or Humane Benefits alone is not sufficient to restrain. Such appear to be the far greater Part of Men, who, thro' Ignorance or vicious Habits, are found to be too insensible both of their natural and civil Obligations. So that we have Reason to believe, that, could the Fear of somewhat future be removed, the Bulk of Mankind (if it might be done in Consistence with their present Interests) would easily break through all other Restraints; or if they paid the Deity, or each other any Homage or Acknowledgment at all, it would be (like what the *Japonesse* are said to allow

PART low to their *Deyro*) little more than a

I. Matter of Form and Complement.



SECT. V.

SINCE it is impossible for Creatures (whose very Beings are the Effects of the Divine Goodness) to render an Equivalent for the Benefits they receive, it follows, that the utmost Acknowledgment they can make, is, to preserve a grateful Sense of them in their Minds, and to express it by their Actions. So that Gratitude cherished in the Mind, and expressed by the Actions, is the Main of our Duty with regard to Practice; and the Principles of Hope and Fear are no otherwise effectual than as they assist Gratitude.

*Natural Religion*, considered with regard to Practice, (or the Gratitude we owe to God, according to the Prescription of Reason or the Evidence of the Light of Nature) has an immediate Respect either to God himself or to the Creatures. In the former Respect it appears to have Four principal Parts; *viz.*

Praise for Benefits received.


Prayer for Favours wanted.

Repentance for Faults committed.

Patience with regard to Penalties inflicted.

In



In the latter respect (or as it more im- PART  
mediately regards ourselves and our I.  
Fellow-Creatures) it hath many other   
Parts, which are more peculiarly stiled  
*Virtues*, and which consist in a grate-  
ful Imitation of the Moral Perfections  
of God, *viz.* his Veracity, Justice and  
universal Beneficence. But these come  
not within the Compass of our pre-  
sent Design.

## SECT. VI.

THE most immediate Expression of  
our Gratitude to God is *Praise*. As  
the inanimate Parts of the World are  
usually said silently to praise and glori-  
fy their Creator by the surprizing Beau-  
ties of their Composition, and the ex-  
quisite Regularity of their Motions, so  
the Intelligent Parts may be said to do  
it more peculiarly by the noble Pow-  
ers and Virtues of the Mind, and the  
religious Conduct of Life. But this  
Notion of Praise, is of too great Lati-  
tude to be treated of under this parti-  
cular *Section*, as comprehending the  
Sum of all Religion: For every reli-  
gious Act is, in this improper or figu-  
rative Sense, a giving Praise or Glory  
to God. We shall therefore fix upon  
the proper Notion of it, which restrains  
it to the Thoughts and Words, and  
C makes

PART makes it to consist in our always thinking and speaking most gratefully and magnificently of the Great Author of Nature. That this (and all other Acts of Religion) cannot but be very acceptable to Him, may appear from that Predominant Instinct (or Natural Principle) of Gratitude which He himself hath wrought, more or less, into the Frame and Constitution of Brute Animals. The Brutes (even of some of the most savage Kinds) have been found to be led, as it were by Nature (or rather by the God of Nature) to express their Gratitude (even with the Hazard of their own Welfare) by caressing, protecting and nourishing their Benefactors. And it was not, perhaps, without some Divine Impression that all Men (however prone to Ingratitude themselves) have ever agreed to fix the blackest Marks of Infamy on the Ungrateful.

The *Epicurean* indeed, by deriving all Things from *Chance*, and excusing their Deities from any Concern with inferior Beings, and the *Stoicks*, by supposing an original Fate, have attempted, as it were, to cancel this our Natural Obligation to *Praise*. For how could we think ourselves obliged to express our Gratitude by addressing  
our

our Praise to any Being, though ne- **PART**  
 ver so superiour, if either he was so **I.**  
 improvident as not to concern himself  
 with us and our Affairs, or else so im-  
 potent and void of Liberty as to do  
 nothing to which he was not deter-  
 mined by an external Necessity? But  
 that the Principles of both these  
 Sects are, in this respect, entirely un-  
 philosophical, has been shewn in the  
*Enquiry*. And they have been con-  
 demned by the almost unanimous Vote  
 of the wiser Part of Mankind, which  
 has ever been, that the Supreme Being  
 could not but be most Beneficent and  
 Provident, as well as Omnipotent, and,  
 by Consequence, the most proper Ob-  
 ject of Praise.

The *Persian Magi*, the Disciples of  
 the great *Zoroaster*, though they assert-  
 ed Two Principles, (*Orômasdes* and *A-*  
*rimanias*) the one of Good and the  
 other of Evil; yet they held that both  
 these Principles proceeded from *Zara-*  
*um*, who was the Beneficent Father and  
 Prince of all Things.

The *Egyptians* were, 'tis said, in-  
 structed by their *Hermes* (whom some  
 suppose to have been the Patriarch *Jo-*  
*seph*) to worship One Supreme, most  
 Beneficent, and Provident Being, who,  
 in their *Hieroglyphick Character* was




PART signified by a Falcon, whose piercing  
 I. Sight was thought to be no unfit Em-  
 ~~~~~ blem of a Providence.

The *Greeks* (whatever Fables their Poets either borrowed or invented concerning the Lewdness, Thefts and Cruelties of their fictitious Deities) were generally agreed, that the Supreme God, was, τὸ Κεῖνιστον, or the Best of Beings.

The *Romans*, instructed by *Numa*, believed a God who was both *Optimus & Maximus*, the Best as well as the Greatest. And the like might easily be observed of others, who all agreed in the Opinion, That the Supreme Being was the most proper Object of Praise.

And since Vice, besides its too natural Agreeableness to our depraved Inclinations, never wanted additional Charms to recommend it, therefore the most polite Nations were wont to add solemn Festivals to their publick Praises, the better to recommend the Business of Religion.

But as the Object of our Worship is Omniscient and perfectly acquainted with the most secret Springs and Motives of our Actions, it has ever been agreed by the wiser Part of Men, that neither such solemn Expressions of  
 Praise,

Praise, nor any other outward Actions PART  
can recommend us to Him without the I.  
inward Worship of the Mind. 

SECT. VII.

*Prayer*, strictly taken for an humble Imploration of the Divine Favour and Assistance, springs from the same Root with *Praise*, viz. from a grateful Sense of past and present Benefits; it being the most solemn Expression of our Dependance on, Subjection to, and Trust in the Good and Provident Author of our Beings.

That this is a Part of *Natural Religion* has ever been agreed by those who have made any Use of their Reason; such only excepted, who, with the mentioned *Stoicks* and *Epicureans*, asserted either an immutable Destiny or a blind Chance, to the Exclusion of a Providence.

That none but the Supreme and Independent Being is qualified to be the universal ultimate Object of *Prayer*, is too evident to admit of Dispute. Yet it has been a very general Opinion that certain inferiour Beings were qualified as particular subordinate Objects.

The Occasion of this Opinion might be the Resemblance some have fancied



**PART** between the Divine Majesty and that  
 I. of an earthly Prince, to whom it is  
 better Manners, as well as Policy, to  
 address by the Mediation of his Favou-  
 rites and Ministers, than by a direct  
 and immediate Application. Or else  
 it might proceed from a Notion which  
 others have entertained, as if it was ei-  
 ther impossible for the Deity, or at least  
 inconsistent with his Repose and Hap-  
 piness to attend alone to the Addresses  
 of such Crouds of Supplicants.

However it happened, we find it to  
 have been the almost universal Prac-  
 tice of the *Gentiles* to address the Dei-  
 ty by *Mediators*: For such were their  
 imaginary inferior Gods and Heroes,  
 whom they conceived to be the imme-  
 diate Vicegerents of the Supreme God.

A Practice so universal would almost  
 incline one to think it founded on some  
 genuine Dictate of Reason. But if we  
 reflect but never so little, we shall find  
 it to be quite the Reverse. For to think  
 that He who produced and sustains  
 the World needs to be informed of any  
 Thing that passes in it; or to suppose  
 that He knows the Circumstances and  
 Wants of his Creatures, and yet to ima-  
 gine that He himself wants the Assist-  
 ance of others as Dispensers of his Be-  
 nefits; or lastly, to fancy him to be na-  
 turally



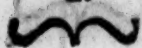
naturally inaccessible to an humble Supplicant without the Ceremony of an Introducer, is plainly to form a very wrong and degrading Idea of the Best as well as Greatest of Beings.

Whether there may not have been some particular Motives of sufficient Weight to incline the Deity to constitute a *Mediator*, is a Question of another Kind. Yet this, at least, is certain, that to address him by one or more Mediators without his Warrant and Institution, was a very rash and unjustifiable Practice, and that it naturally led the *Pagans* to what I conceive to have been the most criminal Part of their Idolatry, I mean, the *worshipping and serving the Creature more than the Creator*: And whether the same Practice may be less rash, or in any respect more justifiable in some who call themselves *Christians*, is not perhaps very difficult to determine.

As for the Circumstances of the Duty of *Prayer*; 'tis in the first place, an undoubted Dictate of Reason, that as our Dependance on God is continual, and our Subjection to him entire, and without Reserve, so we ought ever to be ready to acknowledge this our Dependance and Subjection by frequent

**PART** and most humble Addresses for the Supply of our Wants.

**I.**



Though every Moment of Life is a new Debt contracted to the Preserver of our Beings, yet we need not fear swelling the Accompt, or increasing the Obligation, by our most frequent and importunate Addresses. For certainly, the Deity, who is the Chief Good, cannot but be most ready to communicate his Favours to the Humble and Grateful. The Kind Author of Nature, like an indulgent Parent, we may be assured is ever inclined to shew new Tokens of his Affection to his Off-spring. For his placing us in so well-furnished a World, is alone sufficient to convince us of his Willingness to bestow upon us whatever is necessary to our Comfort and Happiness.

But as we are too apt to mistake what is prejudicial, for what is necessary or convenient, Reason dictates that our Addresses should be with the most entire Submission to the Divine Will. This is no more than the Homage that is naturally due to the Sovereign of the World; and the Consequence of it would be Contentment in every Condition and Circumstance of Life: Whereby we should effectually gain that real Happiness, which we might  
too


too often fail of in case our Petitions PART  
were always granted. I.

Again, Since Men are united in Society, and on that Account, are engaged to implore Benefits of a publick Nature; and since particular Persons are too apt to be remiss and negligent even in petitioning for the Divine Blessings on themselves in a private Capacity; 'tis therefore an undoubted Dictate of Reason, that Times, Places and Persons be set a-part, with all Decency, for the more publick and solemn Exercise of this and other Duties, as well as for publick Instruction and Exhortation to all the Parts of a religious Life. Such has been the Custom of all Nations that had not quite divested themselves of Humanity. For religious Society and Government have, in almost every Country, been of equal Antiquity with the Political.

*Lastly*, Reason dictates that our Addresses to God, both publick and private, be performed not only with the most humble, reverent and submissive Disposition of Mind, but with what is reputed the most decent Posture of the Body. 'Tis the former indeed which is chiefly to be regarded, and particular Circumstances may frequently alter the  
the



PART the Case as to the latter. But in the ge-

I.  Posture of the Body is not to be neglected; for as much as God may justly require all the Tokens of Reverence, of what Kind soever that we are capable of. Which Tokens of Reverence are more especially requisite in the publick Exercise of this Duty of Religion: On which Occasion, if ever, it ought to be our particular Concern to be not only acceptable to God, but beneficial to our Fellow-Creatures; whose Piety is by nothing so apt to be excited as by the visible Tokens of it in others.

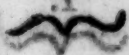
To this Part of *Natural Religion* may be reduced the Customs of solemn Swearing and Vowing, or otherwise invoking the Name of God. For tho' their End is Civil or Political, viz. either for confirming a Contract or determining a Controversy; yet in themselves considered, they are, if duly performed, religious Acts, being serious Professions of our Belief of the Divine Omniscience, Providence and Justice.

It has ever been the Custom of the most Civilized Nations to swear by their Gods; and such an Oath has always been esteemed Sacred and inviolable

lable. The Design of its first Introduction was evidently the Good of Society. For since the Eye of the Magistrate could not reach every Action, nor the Hand of Justice take hold of every Offender, 'twas therefore necessary that the Tribunal of Conscience should supply the Defect of that of the Civil Government. Some particular *Sects* indeed (I mean the *Pelagians* and our modern *Quakers*) have absolutely condemned the Practice of Swearing in any Case. But they are easily confuted both from the Nature and End of an Oath, which evidently prove that Swearing, when rightly performed, is (as we before observed) not only an Act of Homage to God, but a Benefit to Society.

PART

I.



## SECT. VIII.

ANOTHER Duty of Religion, as it immediately regards God, which is discoverable by the Light of Nature, is *Repentance*: A Duty acknowledged in all Ages, and (till of late) by all *Nations* and *Sects*, who had any Sense of their Dependance on, and Subjection to the Deity. Indeed, the Opinions of some of the *Epicureans*, who had in Effect levelled themselves with the Brutes, and of the *Stoicks*, who attempted to mount above the Condition  
of

**PART** of Human Nature, were the wide  
**I.** Extremes which met at last in Denying the Necessity of Repentance. Those of the latter *Seet* excluded Repentance in Consequence of their Opinion of *Apathie*; which made the Perfection of Man to consist in a Freedom from Sorrow and all other Passions: Though at the same time they allowed of condemning one's self for evil Actions. But what was it less than perversely to set themselves against the Bent of our Nature, when they would have us to condemn and be displeased with ourselves without Sorrow?

*Repentance*, or a hearty Sorrow for and Confession of our Faults, proceeding from a grateful Sense of formerly abused Favours, joyned with a sincere Resolution and Endeavour of future Gratitude and Obedience, is the least Acknowledgment (though the greatest and most valuable we can make) to the offended Author of our Beings.

How far Reason assisted the wisest of the Heathens in making a Judgment of it's Nature and Efficacy, may appear from the following Remarks.

1.) A moderate Degree of Thinking was sufficient to assure them that the End of God in producing and furnishing

ing



ing Men with natural Powers or Principles of Action was not his own Benefit or Advantage, but their Happiness. He wanted no Accession to his Glory; nor could he receive any. Our doing that from whence, in the usual improper or figurative Way of Speaking, Glory is said to accrue to him, is truly and properly nothing else but the pursuing our own highest Interest and Happiness. His Glory sufficiently manifests itself without our Services; and to think that any Thing that we can do or suffer can really manifest it yet more, is more unreasonable than to imagine that the Reflection of a Ray can enlighten the Sun. And had the Divine Glory (or Perfection) never manifested itself by the Creation of Man, or even the Universe, 'tis certain that the Divine Happiness would have been eternally and immutably the same.

2.) Since God's End in governing us cannot but be the same that He proposed to himself in creating us, it seems that they considered him (when they reasoned concerning the Efficacy of *Repentance*) not only as the most Beneficent Author of their Beings, but as a most Wise and Just Governour. In the former Notion they regarded him as intending the Happiness of Man-kind

**PART** I. kind as his End; in the latter, as pursuing that End by employing and encouraging the most proper Means in order to obtain it.

3.) Since the Government of Reasonable Beings, furnished with a Power of Determining their Actions, cannot but be exercised by the most Wise as well as Beneficent Lord of the World in such Manner as is most agreeable to their particular Natures, they concluded that their Supreme Happiness could not but be suspended by him on their acting according to Reason; as also that the Means of attaining the End of his Government, (*viz.* their Happiness) could not but be of such a Nature as most effectually tended to incline them to submit to Reason as the Rule of their Conduct, in Consistence with their native Freedom of Action.

4.) These Means appeared to them to be of two Sorts, *viz.* Rewards and Punishments: The former of which are qualified to work on our Hopes, the latter on our Fears; the two main Springs of Action in the Generality of Men.

5.) They concluded it to be most Fit, and therefore most Just, both that those who refused to accept their Supreme Happiness as the Reward of reasonable

or

of vertuous Actions, should be exclud- PART  
ed from it; and that those who did in I.  
effect set a Value on Misery by choosing  
Vice, which naturally and evidently  
tends to it, should be made directly  
miserable.

6.) Consequently, since it was mani-  
fest by the Course of Things that Re-  
wards and Punishments were not fi-  
nally distributed in the present State,  
(which appeared to be a State of Trial)  
it was obvious to infer from the Justice  
of God, that they were chiefly reserv-  
ed to a future State.

7.) As nothing can ordinarily qua-  
lify for the Rewards of the future State  
(or our supreme Happiness) but Perse-  
verance in a Reasonable or Virtuous  
Course, so it seem to them to follow  
that nothing could expose Men to the  
Punishments of that State but Obsti-  
nacy in a Course of Vice or unreason-  
able Opposition to the Divine Will.

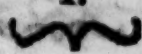
8.) Consequently, as a virtuous Man  
declining from the Paths of Virtue, or  
deviating from the Rule of Reason, by  
becoming obstinately and incorrigibly  
Vicious, could not but forfeit his Re-  
ward, so, perhaps, it seemed equally  
reasonable to conclude, that a vicious  
Person repenting of his past Offences,  
and sincerely betaking himself to, and  
per-



**PART** persevering in a Course of virtuous Actions, should escape the Penalty due to his former Rebellions. For as the declining from a virtuous to a vitious Course renders us obnoxious to the Tokens of Divine Displeasure, so no Reason could perhaps be assigned by those who had no Notion of a plenary Satisfaction for Sin, why repenting and returning to a Course of Virtue should not be sufficient to qualify for the Divine Favour.

As for the absolutely infinite Guilt or Demerit of Sin, derived from its being committed against an absolutely Infinite Object, it doth not appear that the Philosophers had the least Notion of it, any more than the Apostles and primitive *Christian* Fathers. For though many of the *Gentiles* supposed the immediate Infliction of an infinite (or eternal) positive Punishment, yet they supposed it only in Case of the most flagitious Crimes (such as the Rape of *Proserpine*, or the War of the Giants †) whereas had they founded it on the infinite Demerit of Sin, as derived from the absolute Infinity of its Object, they must (if they talk'd consistently) have supposed it in every Case: For as much

† Vide Virg. *Æneid.* 6.

as all Sins, having the same Infinite PART  
Object, must have been supposed to I.  
have had the same infinite Demerit. 

On the contrary, it appears that they made their Estimate of the Demerit of Sin, not so much from the Dignity of the Object or Party offended, as from the Nature and Circumstances of the Subject or offending Party. They were of Opinion (if we except the *Stoicks*, who made all Sins equal, though not infinite) that greater or lesser Degrees either of Knowledge or Obstinacy in the Offender, rendered the Demerit of his Offence greater or less in Proportion. But no room is left to suppose greater or lesser Degrees of Demerit, if the Demerit of all Sins be absolutely infinite or equal.

Thus much may be sufficient as to the Efficacy of *Repentance*, according to the Prospect that was yielded to the *Gentiles* by the Light of Nature or Reason.

Reason, if duly attended to, will instruct us, that though Sorrow for Sin is a necessary Condition of Pardon, yet it is not, in itself, pleasing to God, but only as it prepares the Way to Amendment of Life. The Best of Beings cannot take Delight in the Sor-

**PART** row and Misery of his Creatures. A-

**I.** amendment is therefore the most essential Part of our Duty in Case of Offence, and if the Offence be Wronging or Injuring our Fellow-Creatures, Restitution or Reparation to them, where there is Ability, is a necessary Step towards Amendment, as well as Confession to the offended Deity.

Reason will likewise instruct us, that Repentance and Amendment are (above all other Acts of Religion) most acceptable to God when they proceed chiefly from a Principle of Gratitude to him, and an Aversion to what is contrary to his Will; and not merely from the Fear of Punishment or the Hope of Reward. 'Tis the Freedom of any Act which renders it virtuous and commendable. When we repent and amend our Lives chiefly through Fear of Punishment or Hope of Reward, we do little else but follow the strongest Bent of our Nature. 'Tis much like the lifting up our Arms to ward off a Blow, or the stretching out our Hands to receive a Gift; which Actions though not altogether necessary yet admit but of a small Degree of Freedom. But when Repentance and Amendment of Life proceed principally from a grateful Sense of former



merly abused Favours, and an Aversion **PART**  
to future Ingratitude, we act with **I.**  
greater Liberty. For though we have  
somewhat of a Disposition to Gratitude,  
yet (as was elsewhere observed) it is  
not usually so strong as either our Fear  
of Misery or our Hope of Happiness.

**SECT. IX.**

**PATIENCE**, is another Part of *Natural Religion* as it immediately regards God. This, though a Duty not easily practised, is yet very easily demonstrated. For as it cannot be doubted that we owe the Author of our Beings as complete Obedience as is in our Power; so 'tis certain, that our Obedience to Him is not complete, unless it be Passive as well as Active.

*Patience* is here taken in the largest Sense, as signifying an entire, habitual Submission and Resignation to the Will of God, proceeding from the Knowledge of our own Demerit, and a grateful Sense of and Confidence in his Wisdom and Lenity in the Government of the World.

If the supreme Government of the World be in the Direction of an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being, 'tis most certain that no Inconvenience can befall us but what is either inflicted

PART ted, or, at least, permitted, by him.

I. And if the Supreme Governour be likewise a most Beneficent and Provident Being, 'tis as certain that nothing of that Kind is either inflicted or permitted, in the present State, but what either actually tends, or is capable of tending, to our Advantage and Happiness. Which Reflections yield a solid Foundation of Patience or Resignation to his Will.

Yet *Patience* doth not include a *Stoical Apathie*, or an entire Freedom from all Passions; but only an habitual Endeavour to bridle and govern them according to the Rule of right Reason. Though the Passions are neither morally Good nor Evil in themselves, yet under the Direction of Reason, they are as the Wings whereby the Mind either pursues what is Good or flies from what is Evil. So that to seek to divest ourselves of them would be so far from tending to the perfecting of our Nature, that were it to be effected, it would render us less perfect and less capable of Religion than before. The Passions of Love, Hope and Fear, we have observed to be the immediate Principles of religious Practice. This is their natural Effect; and if they sometimes produce Effects that are  
contrary

contrary, these are to be looked upon PART  
as monstrous or unnatural. If the I.  
Passions are sometimes Rebels and Op-  
posers of the Government of Reason,  
yet at other times, they most effectual-  
ly support it. If they often prove the  
Betrayers of the Cause of Virtue,  
they are, at other times, her faithful  
Guardians. If they sometimes hurry us  
from the Path of Happiness, 'tis for  
Want either of a greater Degree of  
Knowledge to direct, or of Resolution  
to restrain and moderate them. But to  
furnish the most effectual Supplies for  
both these Wants, by clearer Discove-  
ries of the Evil of Vice, and the Me-  
thod of Pardon, and by more powerful  
Motives to the Practice of Virtue,  
will appear to be the chief Design of  
*Revelation.*







THE  
*Christian Religion*  
 FOUNDED UPON  
 REASON.

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PART II.  
*Of Revealed Religion.*

SECT. I.

PART  
 II.



THE following *Propositions* are either so evident in themselves, or so evidently deducible from the Principles established in the Former Essay, that they may, its conceived, be premised here, as Truths not likely to be disputed by the Assertors of *Natural Religion*.

1.) *The proper Happiness of every Species of Beings was attainable by, and connected with, the right Exercise of such*

such Natural Powers or Faculties as **PART**  
were bestowed by the Beneficent Creator **II.**  
of the World; for the not using, or abu-  
sing of which, Intelligent Beings both  
were and are, more or less accountable  
to Him.

2.) We are not to suppose any super-  
natural or extraordinary Assistance with-  
out assigning such Reasons for it as may  
suit with the Wisdom, as well as the  
Beneficence, of the Great Creator.

3.) A supernatural or extraordinary  
Assistance, whenever to be supposed, can-  
not (in a State of Probation or Trial)  
be conceiv'd to be of such a Kind as en-  
tirely and universally to render useless  
the natural Faculties of the Beings to  
whom it is communicated or imparted.

4.) 'Tis a necessary Property of the  
most powerful, wisest and best of Beings  
ever to do what is really most fit with  
regard to the Attainment of his most  
Beneficent Ends, in consistence with the  
proper Use of the Faculties of his In-  
telligent Creatures in general.

If we apply these Principles to the  
Case of a Divine Revelation to Men,  
it will be evident, that this, being a  
Sort of supernatural or extraordinary  
Assistance, is only to be supposed on  
the following Grounds.

## PART

## II.

1.) That it is not superfluous, but imparted for Reasons worthy of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and conducive to the Happiness of Men.

2.) That it doth not render useless the natural Powers or Faculties of Men, by entirely and universally preventing their due Exercise.

That an extraordinary or supernatural Revelation of the Divine Will to Men was far from being superfluous, may appear from the following Reflections, which are the fundamental Principles by which the Practice of Natural Religion must be allowed to be supported.

We cannot doubt that the Creator of all Things had an original, independent Right of ordaining and qualifying his Creatures for such particular Ends as were judged Fit by his most perfect Wisdom.

We may be assured from the Consideration of his most perfect Wisdom, that as the Nature and Capacity of every Creature were suited to it's End, so his Government of the respective Creatures for the better attaining their particular Ends, is ordinarily suited to their several Natures and Capacities.

Men in particular, being furnish'd with natural Powers or Principles of Action,



*Action, joyn'd with Liberty, we may* PART  
conclude were designed for Liberty of II.  
*Action; and consequently, the Divine* ~~~~~  
*Government of Men (at least in a State*  
*of Trial) must be ordinarily consistent*  
*with the free Exercise of their natural*  
*Powers.*

*This Action for which Men were de-*  
*signed, was questionless ordain'd by God*  
*for some ultimate End which was wor-*  
*thy his Wisdom and Goodness.*

*That End could not be any Advan-*  
*tage of his own (since he was indigent*  
*of Nothing) but the Happiness of Men;*  
*which is chiefly reserv'd to a Future*  
*State, and ordinarily connected with the*  
*proper Use of their Faculties in the pre-*  
*sent State; which is a State of Trial.*

*Every Action tending to a particu-*  
*lar End must be directed by some Rule*  
*or other.*

*The immediate necessary Rule of*  
*Men's Actions is their Reason.*

*Whatever is design'd by the most per-*  
*fect Wisdom to be a necessary or per-*  
*petual Rule, must be steady and uni-*  
*form.*

*Reason therefore, when duly exercis-*  
*ed, about Objects of which we have clear*  
*and distinct Ideas, is not an uncertain*  
*Guide, but proceeds upon necessary, im-*  
*mutable, uniform Principles.*

*Nothing*

**PART II.** *Nothing is immutable but the Divine Nature and Essential Will, and such Truths as are immediately founded on that most perfect Nature and Will.*

*Reason was therefore capable of attaining a sufficient Information of the Divine Nature and of the Divine Essential Will.*

*Reason was no otherwise design'd to be the Rule of Men's Practice, than as declarative of the Nature and Will of God with regard to practical Truths.*

*Whatever Reason plainly discovers to be agreeable to the Divine Nature and Will, is right (and therefore good) conducive to our chief Happiness, and the Matter of our Duty.*

*Whatever it declares to be otherwise is wrong (and therefore evil) inconsistent with our chief Happiness, and to be avoided, not only as most prejudicial to ourselves, but as most offensive to our great Benefactor and Lawgiver.*

*In order to the more effectual pursuing what is good (or right or agreeable to the Divine Nature and Will) and avoiding what is evil (or wrong or disagreeable thereto) Men were furnished with natural Appetites or Passions (which were designed to be the Assistants and Subjects of Reason) as well*

as

as with Liberty or a complete Freedom of Will, consisting in a Power of Acting or not Acting according to their Instigation: Which Sort of Liberty tho' it is not a Perfection in every Case, yet it is a requisite Qualification in every Being who is in a State of Trial.

PART  
II.

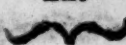
A State of Trial, in some manner or other, was necessary, as being a necessary Result of the Relation between the most Wise as well as Beneficent Creator and his intelligent Creatures, and of the Obligation to Obedience arising immediately from thence, without any previous Contract.

Thus stood the Case between the Great Creator and the Humane Species. Had Men duly exercised their Liberty, and govern'd their Appetites and Actions, by the Rule of Reason in Obedience to the Creator's Will, no doubt they had been happy. But we have Histories sufficient to convince us, that there has been a very early Deviation from that Rule. The Passions, tho' design'd to be the Subjects and Assistants of Reason, soon became Rebels and Usurpers. So that Men, for the most part, being as it were, blindly driven by the Force of ungoverned Appetites, disobeyed the Laws of the most Beneficent Creator by.



PART by pursuing either some lesser good  
 II. or some evil disguised under the specious Appearance of good, instead of their chief Happiness. And this Disease of our rational Nature spreading like a Contagion, the Case of the succeeding Ages became still more deplorable. Evil Examples and Prejudices added new Force to the prevailing Passions, and Reason and Liberty of Will, for want of due Exercise, still became weaker and less able to regain their lost Dominion. Of this so general a Corruption the Wisest of the *Pagan* Philosophers \* and Lawgivers were very sensible. These partly expressed their Desires and Expectations of some extraordinary Remedy, and partly made use of the Pretence, endeavouring to persuade vitious, but ignorant and credulous Men that they acted by the Commission, and taught by the Inspiration of the Gods. And indeed even the bare Pretence of Divine Revelation appears to have had much more extensive Effects than the abstracted Reasonings, and even the wisest Precepts, of mere Philosophy. But those Effects were not so durable as extensive. The Pretence of  
 Divine

\* Vid. Plat. de Repub. Lib. 6. & in Alcibiade 2.

Divine Revelation, without sufficient PART  
Evidence to support it, was soon treat- II.  
ed with Contempt; and so far were   
Men from learning Virtue from those  
pretended Messengers of the Gods, that  
in many Places, they even deified  
Vice and fathered their own Impie-  
ties on the Gods themselves.

In this Case especially, it is not to be  
conceived that the True God, the most  
Provident and Beneficent of Beings,  
would long sit as an idle Spectator,  
without interposing by such a Reve-  
lation of his Will as might, thro' it's  
convincing Evidence and awful Au-  
thority, be a more effectual Remedy  
for those Evils than unassisted Rea-  
son could have been. That he has  
actually thus interposed we have far  
less Room to doubt than we have to  
doubt of an affectionate Father's in-  
terposing, by his Advice and Autho-  
rity, to prevent the self-destructive Ef-  
fects of the culpable Ignorance and  
Folly of his Offspring.

This way of arguing, I conceive,  
no Man who believes a Providence,  
can refuse to come into. Some I e-  
ven apprehend will be ready to pro-  
ceed farther, by supposing it would  
have been much more fit for the com-  
mon Father of Mankind to interpose  
not

ART not only by the Declaration of his  
II. Will but by the Exertion of his Pow-  
er, in such manner as infallibly to  
have prevented so great a Degeneracy.  
But this Supposition is contrary to  
the most perfect Wisdom of the Di-  
vine Government, which demonstrates  
it to be most fit for the Deity to act  
with Reference to his Creatures in a  
manner suitable to their Natures,  
States and Capacities: Which Man-  
ner of acting cannot consist (in a State  
of Trial) with universally preventing  
the Exercise of the completest Liber-  
ty. Whereas, in granting such a Re-  
velation of his Will, together with  
such other sufficient Assistances as con-  
sisted with the natural Use of their  
Faculties, the Goodness of God to-  
wards Mankind, (in the mentioned  
Case,) was as great as could possibly  
consist with his most Perfect Wisdom.  
Any thing that was, Universally, ei-  
ther more or less than this, would  
have been inconsistent either with his  
most perfect Wisdom, on the one hand,  
or with his most Perfect Goodness on  
the other. And consequently, nothing  
could be so fit, and therefore so ne-  
cessary, to that Being whose neces-  
sary Perfection it is ever to do what  
is fittest with a View to the Attain-  
ment



ment of his most wise and beneficent PART  
Ends. For tho' we are not, in eve- IL  
ry Case, qualified to judge of what  
is fittest, and by Consequence neces-  
sary, with regard to the Divine Being,  
yet in this Case, (which was plainly  
very different from the Case of the  
Beings known by the Name of *Angels*)  
we certainly are.

As to the Manner of communicat-  
ing such a Divine Revelation, 'tis plain  
that it must have been either imme-  
diate, to every Man (*viz.* by a distinct  
Inspiration) or else mediate; by the  
Means of Tradition (either Oral or  
Scriptural) derived from one or more  
Men.

An immediate Revelation of the  
Divine Will to every Man would have  
been subject to the following Inconve-  
niencies. Either, in the first Place,  
it must have carried with it so much  
Internal Light or Evidence as not to  
have suffered Men to doubt of the  
Truth of it; and so it would have  
universally prevented the proper Use  
of their Rational Faculties, and by  
consequence, it would have been in-  
consistent with the Nature of the Di-  
vine Government, which, as we have  
observ'd, cannot (in the present State  
of Trial) be supposed universally to  
render

**PART** render useless the natural Faculties of  
 II. it's Subjects; (the like to which may  
 be said of any universal supernatural  
 Conviction of the Truth of a Revelation already made to others, thro' any strong Impressions independent on rational Evidence) or else their Belief of it must have depended on some external Proofs, such as Miracles or Prophecies. But if either of these Proofs had been made use of for the Satisfaction of every particular Person, in every Age, as to the Truth of his particular Revelation, they would not have been regarded as any thing extraordinary, and would perhaps have made no more Impression on the Minds of Men than the common Events and Appearances of Nature. Besides, Miracles, in this Case, would have been such a perpetual Force on the Constitution of the World, as must have produced an endless Disorder, and have greatly impeach'd the Wisdom of the supreme Governour.

It therefore follows, that the traditional Way of communicating an extraordinary Revelation of the Divine Will, was the most suitable both to the Wisdom of God and to the State and Capacities of Men. And where-  
 as there are two Sorts of Tradition,  
*viz.*

*viz.* either Oral (by word of Mouth) **PART**  
or Scriptural (by Writing) 'tis evi- **II.**  
dent that, since the commonly sup-  
posed Reduction or Shortening of the  
Term of humane Life, the latter  
Way (*viz.* that which is scriptu-  
ral) is preferable. In this Method  
of communicating the most useful  
Knowledge the wisest Nations have  
generally agreed. The *Chinese* have  
the Writings of their *Confutius*. The  
*Egyptians* had their Hieroglyphicks,  
and the *Romans* their *Sybilline* Books,  
and the twelve Tables of their Laws.  
And as for such who (since the men-  
tioned Period) have made use of Oral  
Tradition for transmitting any Body  
of Laws or Doctrines to future Ages,  
either they have been so unpolish'd as  
to want the Art of Writing (as the  
*Americans*) or they have had the In-  
tention to confine the Benefit of their  
Laws and Institutions to themselves  
(as the *Brackmans*) or else they have  
had another politick End to serve (as  
the less ancient *Jews* and *Romanists*)  
*viz.* to secure to themselves the Power  
of imposing on the Ignorance and Cre-  
dulity of Men.

And as it is reasonable to suppose  
that a Revelation of such Importance  
to Mankind should be committed to

E

writing,



**PART** writing, not only for its Preservation,  
**II.** but likewise for the more effectually  
 preventing of Imposture, so 'tis no less  
 reasonable to think that the Divine  
 Providence would be peculiarly con-  
 cern'd to keep it so pure and entire  
 (with regard, at least, to Matters of  
 considerable Importance) as that it  
 might always remain a sufficient Rule  
 of Faith and Practice.

### SECT. II.

**THE** Reasons which have induced  
 us to conclude that there is actually in  
 the World some sufficient scriptural  
 Revelation of the Divine Will, cannot  
 but be allow'd their Weight by such  
 who acknowledge a Providence. But  
 the great Question is, How we may be  
 assured that any particular pretended  
 Revelation is that sufficient Revelation.  
 Here we may doubtless lay it down  
 as an indisputable Principle, That a  
 Revelation which is truly Divine must  
 be attended with so much Evidence, at  
 least, as is sufficient to yield Satisfac-  
 tion to every fair and impartial Enquirer.  
 This Principle is an immediate Infe-  
 rence from the Nature of the Divine  
 Government, which (as we observ'd)  
 cannot but be (ordinarily) suited to the  
 States and Capacities of it's Subjects;  
 and

Of Revealed Religion.

and which, by consequence, must (at **PART**  
least in a State of Trial) admit of the **III.**  
proper Use of all their natural Facul-  
ties; and likewise from the Nature of  
such a Revelation which, being of the  
last Importance, cannot but require  
sufficient Evidence.

Let us therefore consider what Evi-  
dence we may reasonably expect in a  
Matter of this Kind.

Tho' such an universal *internal* Evi-  
dence as, by it's Clearness, may be sup-  
posed entirely to prevent the Exercise  
of Reason, and so to render useless the  
principal Power or Faculty of Men,  
would be irreconcilable to the Wisdom  
of the Divine Government (at least in  
the Present State, which we have the  
greatest Reasons to think is a State of  
Trial; which State supposes our future  
Happiness or Unhappiness to depend on  
the good or ill Use of our natural Pow-  
ers or Faculties) yet doubtless we may  
expect to find any other Evidence,  
whether external or internal, which  
the Use of our natural Faculties both  
admits of and requires.

We may doubtless expect such *inter-*  
*nal* Evidence as consists in the Reasq-  
nableness of the whole Revelation, and  
the visible Agreement of all it's most  
important Parts. And, because this

**PART** internal Evidence could not, alone, amount to a sufficient Proof, 'tis therefore reasonable to conclude that some *external* Proofs should be added which might most powerfully strike and most sensibly affect the Minds of Men.

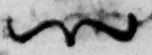
These Proofs we may suppose to be of two Sorts,

1.) Such as were most proper to convince those who lived at the Time of it's first Promulgation: Such as the fulfilling of ancient Prophecies (if any such there were) in the Person or Persons who publish'd it, their unblameable Lives, their Courage and Constancy in suffering (as Occasion offered) to confirm the Truth of their Testimony, their Miracles (or the Production of Effects above their proper natural Powers) and their Prophecies of such near Events as depended not on the settled Course of natural Causes.

2.) Such as were most fit to convince those who should live in succeeding Ages: Such as the Conveyance both of the Revelation itself and of the History of the mention'd external Proofs of it's Divine Original in the most unexceptionable Manner, and likewise the gradual Accomplishment of absolute Prophecies of remote Events.

When



When we are convinc'd that all these **PART**  
Proofs, both external and internal, con- **II.**  
cur, (as we shall undertake to prove )  
they do with regard to *Christianity*)  
then we have, perhaps, the utmost  
rational Evidence that a Matter of this  
Nature can be supposed to be capable  
of: Upon which, as being, in all re-  
spects abundantly sufficient, 'tis cer-  
tainly most reasonable to depend. For  
if Veracity and Providence are to be  
ascribed to the Divine Being, we may  
be assured, that all these Proofs or  
Characters of an extraordinary Revela-  
tion of the Divine Will shall never be  
permitted to agree to any Imposture:  
It being absolutely inconsistent with  
the Supposition of a most veracious  
and provident Being to imagine he  
should either cause or permit us, (espe-  
cially in this Affair) to be reduced to  
such a Case as not to act reasonably un-  
less we give our Assent to a Lie.

It must indeed be confess'd, that  
there is scarce any one of the mention-  
ed *external* Proofs or Characters which  
hath not serv'd, at some Time or other,  
to recommend Doctrines which were  
far from being Divine. Not only *Ju-  
daism* and *Christianity*, but even *Poly-  
theism* and *Atheism*, have had their  
*Martyrs*. Not only the *Old* and *New*

**PART** *Testament Prophets* have foretold future  
**III** Events, but the pretended *Oracles* of  
 the *Pagans* have sometimes done the  
 same. Not only *Jesus* and *Moses*, but  
 the *Egyptian Sorcerers*, *Simon Magus*,  
 and even *Apollonius Tyanæus* and others  
 (if we may give Credit to *Pagan Hi-*  
*storians*) have done strange and unac-  
 countable Things. Tho', I think, it  
 must likewise be confess'd, that the  
 Miracles ascribed to *Jesus* seem to ar-  
 gue such an universal Dominion over  
 the Works of Nature, that if literally  
 true (as they must be if *Jesus* be, what  
 we shall prove him to be, the promised  
*Messias*, one of whose Characters it was  
 to work Miracles) their single Evidence  
 could not but be next to irresistible.

It seems, however, that neither any  
 of the mention'd external Proofs or  
 Characters, nor all of them together,  
 ought absolutely to determine our As-  
 sent, without a due Regard to that one  
*internal* Character, *viz.* the Reasona-  
 bleness of the Revelation itself, or it's  
 Agreeableness to our clear Conceptions  
 of the Divine Nature and the immu-  
 table Relations of Things. This alone  
 is sufficient to assure us that a Revela-  
 tion is, at least, agreeable to the Will  
 of God (forasmuch as his Nature and  
 Will are ever agreeable to each other)  
 tho'

tho' not to prove it to be an extraordinary Discovery of that Will. But any of the other Characters (and even all of them) without this, may, for ought we can be assured, agree to an Imposture. For that both unreasonable and pernicious Doctrines have been sometimes suffer'd (as a Punishment for the Neglect and Abuse of Reason) to appear in the specious Disguise of Truth, is what cannot be denied. Besides, every Man cannot have the Opportunity to be sufficiently inform'd and duly affected with the external Characters or Proofs of a Revelation, and no Man (as will be made appear) can be under an immediate Obligation to believe without a Possibility of sufficient Information. But every Man, who has the right Use of his Faculties, join'd with their due Exercise, can perceive whether a Revelation (in it's main Scope or Design at least) is agreeable to Reason.

Tho', perhaps, we know not precisely where to fix the Limits of the natural Power or Skill of Agents, with regard to *Miracles*, nor can infallibly determine how far either Chance or Cunning may have sometimes contributed to the fulfilling of *Predictions*, nor how far it may have consisted with the Wisdom and



**PART** Goodness of God, in some Cases, to permit the Delusions of ill-designing Men  
**II.** or other intelligent Beings, yet of this we are infallibly assured, that having furnished us with Powers or Faculties sufficient to qualify us for the Practice of Religion (or a reasonable and free Obedience to his Will) He has likewise enabled us to judge of the Reasonableness, at least, of any pretended Revelation of that Will; and that, if we neglect to employ the Powers or Faculties he has given us, the Delusion will be principally owing to ourselves. God, we know, has likewise given us Sight and Taste and other Senses to distinguish what is either Beneficial or Destructive to the Constitutions of our Bodies; but if we stupidly or perversely neglect to make Use of them, we can have no sufficient Grounds to expect the Divine Power should exert itself to prevent the Consequences. Now, we all know, that what the Sight, the Taste and the other Senses are to the Body, that Reason is to the Mind. And therefore, as our outward Senses, though not capable of perceiving every Thing, are, when exercised about their proper Objects, sufficient, in all ordinary Cases, to inform us of what is prejudicial to our Bodies,

Bodies, so our Reason, though not ca- PART  
pable of working without Ideas, yet II.  
if duly improved and exercised about  
Objects of which we have clear and  
distinct Ideas, is (as we may be as-  
sured) sufficient to guard against those  
Errors which are hurtful to the  
Mind.

But though our Reason should meet  
with some considerable Difficulties in  
a Revelation that has all the external  
Characters of one that is truly Divine,  
we are not therefore to reject it, un-  
less the Difficulties necessarily include  
in them a Contradiction, or somewhat  
that is plainly contrary to our clear  
Perception of the Agreement or Dis-  
agreement of our Ideas. For as we  
do not therefore deny the Material  
Universe to be the Work of God be-  
cause of some *Phænomena* which we  
cannot clearly comprehend, so nei-  
ther ought we to deny a Revelation,  
thus attested, to be the Word of God,  
merely on account of some Difficul-  
ties which we cannot explain. In this  
Case Reason will direct us rather to  
imitate the diligent Enquirers into the  
Abstrusities of Nature, and vigorously  
to exert ourselves in framing Hypo-  
theses to solve those Difficulties, at  
least so far as to remove any Appear-  
ance



PART II. **ance of an Inconsistence or Contradiction.** For, if we know any thing, we know and are assured, that as nothing that is inconsistent or contradictory is included in the Divine Nature, so the Divine Power doth not extend to Contradictions. Though Almighty Power can do every Thing (and even create Something where there was Nothing) yet a Contradiction, (which is inconsistent and destroys itself, by importing that it is and is not at the same Time and in the same Sense) being a pure Nothing, cannot be made or created by any Power, as being no Object of Power.

From what has been observed, we may draw this Conclusion, That it is a great Inconsistence or Contradiction for Men to yield Assent to any Doctrine on Supposition of its being Divinely revealed, if it be plainly contradictory to Reason, when the chief Ground of our Assent to any Revelation as Divine must be its *Reasonableness*.

But here arises another Question, *viz.* How far the Judgment of Reason extends with Reference both to the Proofs and Contents of such a Revelation? To which, I conceive, we may reply,

1.) 'Tis



1.) 'Tis certainly the Priviledge of P.A.R.T. Reason to enquire both into the Histo- II. ry and Nature of the external Proofs. ~~~~~

2.) No doubt but it is likewise the Privilege of Reason to judge concerning the Genius of the Language, the Nature of the Style, and the Propriety and Connection of the Terms or Words in which the Revelation is made. Otherwise we could not be capable of distinguishing between what is proper and what is figurative in Matters of Faith, or between what is absolute and what is conditional in Matters of Practice.

3.) 'Tis no less the Privilege of Reason to judge of the Truth, Consistence, and Connection of the Ideas signified by the Terms or Words. Otherwise we could be under no Obligation either to believe or practice what appears to result by the clearest Consequence from the Matters which are expressly revealed. Otherwise we could not be sufficiently guarded against Enthusiasm. For tho' it is very agreeable to our Notion of the most Perfect Wisdom to suppose something sublime and astonishing in a Revelation that proceeds from God, yet we cannot suppose him to have inserted either such Ambiguities as were some of the *Pagan Oracles* (whose

**PART** (whose true Sense could not possibly be  
**II.** unriddl'd) or senseless Jargon, as are  
 the Mysteries of the *Rosicrucians* and  
*Behmenists*. For neither of these could  
 be with any better Design than to de-  
 lude our most sincere Endeavours, and  
 to mislead and bewilder that very Rea-  
 son which himself has given us for a  
 Guide.

4.) 'Tis equally the Privilege of  
 Reason to judge and determine (tho'  
 with the utmost Care and Circumspec-  
 tion) concerning the Agreeableness or  
 Disagreeableness of the entire Revela-  
 tion to it's own clear and evident Dic-  
 tates. For the clear Dictates of Reason,  
 we may be assur'd, are such Discoveries  
 of the Divine Nature and Will as no  
 Revelation that is truly Divine can be  
 supposed to contradict or repeal.

Such Exercise of Reason is the Pri-  
 vilege not only of the Learned, but of  
 every Man who has a sufficient Capa-  
 city and Opportunity. For as a com-  
 petent Knowledge of the Proofs and  
 Contents of a Divine Revelation can-  
 not but be of equal Concern to every  
 capable Person to whom it is proposed,  
 so we cannot doubt but they must be  
 equally design'd for the Conviction,  
 Use and Benefit of all capable Men.

Tho'

Tho' a Dependence on the probable PART  
Judgment of Men of reputed Learning II.  
and Integrity is the Duty and cannot  
but be sufficient for such who really  
want the Advantage either of Capacity  
or Opportunity to enquire into the  
Proofs and Contents of a Revelation,  
yet for such who possess both these  
Advantages nothing less than a diligent  
Enquiry into them can be sufficient.  
No Man or Body of Men can, with  
Reason, claim a Privilege to determine  
infallibly for others concerning the  
Truth of any Revelation: For as much  
as those others can have no sufficient  
Conviction of the Justice of their Claim  
without as good Proofs as are necessary  
to convince them of the Truth of the  
Revelation itself. But such Proofs no  
Man, or Body of Men can at present  
pretend to give. Nor can any Man or  
Body of Men justly claim a Privilege  
and Authority to determine thus infal-  
libly for others concerning any very  
important Doctrine of a Divine Reve-  
lation when received: For as much as  
we are assured that such Authority is  
needless (and therefore not given to  
any) since the Doctrines of a Revela-  
tion which is truly Divine, as far at  
least as they are of great Importance,  
cannot but be clearly expressed and  
sufficiently



**PART** sufficiently adapted to the Capacities of  
**II.** all whom they immediately concern;  
 I mean all such who have common Capacity and Opportunity. And as for Matters of Difficulty and less Importance, an Authority thus to decide concerning them is, it seems, not only needless but, as it tends to render our Reason useless, it directly interferes with the Divine Government of the World, which (as was observed) cannot be supposed ordinarily and universally to render useless the natural Powers or Faculties of it's Subjects. Besides, a proper General Council never did, and probably never can, convene to decide concerning such Matters; and reputed General Councils, 'tis well known, have err'd and contradicted each other, as well as the Popes, the *Musties*, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the *Rabbins*, and the Modern Divines and *Cochams*. But Reason, if duly attended to (together with the ordinary Divine Assistance which every Man may, with good Ground, expect in the humble Exercise of it) will, as shall presently be shewn, tho' not absolutely free us from Error yet infallibly lead us to such Knowledge of reveal'd as well as natural Truths as is sufficient and useful to us.

As the Capacities and Circumstances of Men are very different, by which means it becomes impossible that every Proof or Part of such a Revelation should be perfectly perceiv'd and understood by all, we may, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, very safely conclude.

1.) That tho' the mention'd Duty of Dependance on the Judgment of another in certain Cases, imports a Sort of mediate Obligation, yet there can be no immediate Obligation either to Belief or Practice, farther than both the Meaning and Evidence of a Divine Law or Doctrine are possible to be perceiv'd by our selves in particular. If my Senses are defective, or if, on any other account, I neither had nor could have any, or could have but an imperfect, Information of a Law or Doctrine or of it's Divine Authority; or if my Reason be indisposed and, either wholly or in some Degree, incapable of forming a Judgment concerning it, 'tis clear that I am either not immediately obliged by it at all, or at the most, but in Proportion to that Degree of Conviction I am capable of receiving. For tho' the Great Governour of the World has, without Dispute, an absolute Right  
(or

**PART** (or a Right independent on any Being)  
**II.** of prescribing Laws to his Subjects, yet  
 ~~~~~ his own most perfect Justice and Good-  
 ness (or that most perfect Method of  
 acting which his own Nature immuta-  
 bly inclines him to) will not suffer us  
 to suppose that he should extend the  
 Exercise of that Right so far as abso-  
 lutely to exact Obedience from any  
 who, without their Fault, are under  
 a natural or accidental Incapacity of  
 knowing those Laws, Nor doth this  
 Reasoning hold only with respect to  
 such Doctrines and Laws as are of pure  
 Revelation, but it's Force extends even  
 to the Doctrines and Laws of Nature.  
 For tho' their Evidence diffuses itself  
 more universally than that of any pre-  
 tended Supernatural Revelation (in as  
 much as they are capable of a Proof  
 from what every Man, who has the  
 right Exercise of his Faculties, may  
 perceive in his own Mind) yet some  
 Men for Want of Capacity, cannot  
 (without the Assistance of others) have  
 any, or at the best, can have but a very  
 imperfect Idea of them.

2.) If, by reason either of some De-  
 fect in his Faculties, or of some un-  
 avoidable Misfortune in his Circum-  
 stances, a Man can neither mediately  
 nor immediately receive any, or re-  
 ceives



ceives but an imperfect, or even a PART  
wrong Notion of some Part of Divine II.  
Revelation, whether natural or super-  
natural, we may, 'tis humbly conceiv-  
ed, (whatever some too rigid Casuists  
have determined to the contrary) safe-  
ly conclude, that though acting erro-  
neously, yet if sincerely and to the  
best of his Judgment, he has done his  
Duty. For since the very Nature of  
the Divine Government (which, as we  
have observed, cannot but be suited to  
the Capacities of it's Subjects) demon-  
strates that such Knowledge as he is  
capable of attaining, cannot but be  
sufficient for him, it plainly follows,  
that his Practice according to such  
Knowledge, must likewise be suffi-  
cient.

These Reasonings hold good with  
reference to an Entire (supernatural)  
Revelation, as well as with regard to  
any of it's Parts. For as it can be no  
Man's Duty to believe, or Crime to  
disobey, any particular Doctrine or  
Law, if, without his Fault, he is de-  
stitute of all the Means of Informa-  
tion, so it cannot be a Crime for any  
Man not to embrace, or not to act ac-  
cording to such a Revelation, of the  
Credibility of which he can have no  
Information for Want of the necessary  
F Means.

**PART** Means. No Man can be justly obliged  
**II.** to what is impossible in itself. Consequ-  
 ~~~~~  
 quently, it could not be the Intention  
 of the Just God to oblige all Men, or  
 any Man, to believe the Divine Au-  
 thority of any Revelation without al-  
 lowing the necessary Means to inform  
 him of that Authority. God hath not  
 made it our indispensable Duty to find  
 the Truth, but only to endeavour to  
 find it. If therefore Truth doth not  
 happen to be in our Way when we  
 search for it, we do our Duty by doing  
 our Endeavour.

'Tis no less reasonable to conclude,  
 that since it is most certain that God  
 hath not allowed to all Men the ne-  
 cessary Means of Information with re-  
 gard to any extraordinary Revelation  
 of his Will, therefore no such Reve-  
 lation can be of absolute Necessity to  
 the supreme Happiness or Salvation of  
 all Men. Was any such Revelation  
 thus necessary, 'tis impossible to con-  
 ceive how it could consist with the Di-  
 vine Goodness that it should not be  
 published to every Nation in every  
 Age. For (on Supposition of such  
 Necessity) it is not enough to say, that  
 it has formerly been published to every  
 Nation, if its Publication be not con-  
 tinued to every Age; for as much as  
 it

it cannot but sound very harsh in PART  
the Ears of any Man, to affirm, that, II.  
in a Matter of the last Importance, the  
Obstinacy and Infidelity of the  
Fore-fathers, considered in a private  
Capacity, should frustrate the good  
Intentions of the most Beneficent  
Deity towards their distant, and, in  
that respect, innocent Posterity.

From hence we may conclude,  
that though the great Corruptions of  
Mankind rendered such a Revelation  
necessary with regard to God, yet the  
Knowledge of it was not of absolute  
and universal Necessity with regard to  
Men.

S E C T. IV.

As for the Doctrines which we may  
conceive to be inserted in an extra-  
ordinary Revelation, 'tis not unreason-  
able to conclude,

I. That such Doctrines cannot but  
be most clearly expressed, and most  
frequently inculcated, which directly  
tend to form the Practice. For as a  
very great Defection from the Practice  
of Piety and Virtue, first rendered an  
extraordinary Revelation necessary with  
regard to God; so those Discoveries of  
such a Divine Revelation which are of  
the greatest Importance, must, with-



PART out Dispute, such as regard religious  
II. Practice.

2.) That therefore the Doctrines which help to compose an extraordinary Divine Revelation, must be chiefly such as directly regard the Practice of Piety and Virtue.

3.) That, however, it may not be inconsistent with the Divine Wisdom to reveal some Points of Speculation. But then, the Knowledge of these cannot (as far as they are purely speculative) be supposed to have a necessary Connection with our chief Happiness: For (as was proved) our chief Happiness doth not depend on the Extensiveness or Infallibility of our Knowledge, but on the Sincerity of our Practice. And as the Knowledge of such Matters cannot be necessary to our chief Happiness, so neither can the Belief of them, or of any humane Explanations of them, be thus necessary: For as much as neither Knowledge nor Belief can be any otherwise necessary or useful to that End, than as it tends to influence the Practice.

We may here observe, that though an humble Search into Matters of Speculation may well be supposed agreeable to the Intent of the most Wise Revealer;

Revealer; yet if a Search be either **PART**  
undertaken with a View to render our **II.**  
imagined Discoveries the Standard of  
other Mens Faith, or pursu'd so far as  
to draw off ourselves or others from  
the Study and Practice of Piety and  
Virtue, it cannot but be very contrary  
to his Design. For to impose our In-  
terpretations of a publick Divine Re-  
velation as a Rule of Faith on others,  
is to assume an Authority which hath  
been shewn to be both needless and in-  
consistent with the Methods of the Di-  
vine Government. And to draw off  
ourselves or others from the Practice of  
Religion, is, in some degree, to fru-  
strate the chief End of such a Reve-  
lation as is worthy of God.

**S E C T. V.**

**T**HUS much may suffice as to  
the Proofs and Characteristicks of  
such an extraordinary Revelation of  
the Divine Will as we cannot but  
think has been actually published to  
the World. We may next consider,  
What Institution, that pretends to the  
Authority of a Divine Revelation, can  
lay a just Claim to those Proofs and  
Characteristicks.

I persuade myself that whoever will  
seriously and impartially consider the

PART following Remarks, will be no longer  
 II. dubious with regard to this great Point.

1. 'Tis well known that no other pretended Revelation lays any plausible Claim to the mentioned Proofs and Characteristicks but the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelations only; and by consequence, either one or both of these must be truly Divine, or else no pretended Publick Revelation of the Divine Will has any just Claim to Divine Authority: Which we cannot reasonably allow to be the Case, if we reflect on what was said to prove the Fitness, and the Necessity of some publick, well-attested, Divine Revelation.

2. These two Revelations (*viz.* the *Jewish* and *Christian*) mutually confirm each others Pretensions: and consequently, if either the one or the other be truly Divine, they must both be so.

That the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelations mutually confirm each others Pretensions to Divine Authority is certain. Because the numerous Types and Prophecies of the *Jewish* Revelation, relating to the *Messias*, confirm the Divine Mission of *Jesus*, in whom they had their Completion, and the Completion of those Types and Prophecies in *Jesus*, confirms the Truth of  
 the



the *Jewish* Revelation, in which those PART  
Types and Prophecies are contained; II.  
and not only so, but the Completion of  
those Types and Prophecies in *Jesus*,  
proves the Abrogation of some Part of  
the *Jewish* Revelation, viz. whatever  
related to the distinguishing Privileges  
of the *Jewish* Nation, and the Ceremo-  
nial Law. Consequently, the *Christian*  
Revelation is not only a Divine Reve-  
lation, as well as the *Jewish*, but it is  
the only Divine Revelation that is en-  
tirely in Force.

That the Types and Prophecies of  
the *Jewish* Revelation relating to the  
*Messias*, have had their Completion in  
*Jesus*, and that those religious Privi-  
leges and Institutions which were typi-  
cal and peculiar to the *Jewish* Nation,  
were thereby abrogated, will appear  
from the following Reflections.

I. 'Tis certain that we find in the  
*Jewish* Revelation many Prophecies  
(said to have been delivered not only  
by different Persons, but in many dif-  
ferent Ages of the World) which, all  
of them, have long been conceived  
more or less plainly to center in a cer-  
tain extraordinary Person, called, by  
way of Eminence, *the Messias*; who  
was to be born of the Family of *Da-  
vid*, at a certain Place and at a fixed  
Time,

PART II. Time, for the Good and Advantage not only of the *Jews*, but of all Nations; who was to work Miracles, and to be cut off or put to Death; soon after which, the City of *Jerusalem* was to be destroyed, and such a new State of Things introduced as was inconsistent with such Privileges as were peculiar to the *Jewish* Nation. For some of those Prophecies foretold the making of a New Covenant which should be common to all Nations, and the choosing Priests and Levites out of all People: Which Expressions can import no less than the Resumption of all those peculiar Privileges which had so long distinguished the *Jews* from other Nations: All which exactly agrees with the History of *Jesus*. We find likewise many Ceremonies in that Revelation, which as they were in themselves of no Moral Efficacy (such as the Sacrifices and Purifications) may very reasonably be supposed to have been instituted as merely typical Representations of some greater Things that were future. Accordingly, the *Christian* Revelation assures us, that they were, no other than Types or Figures of the Sacrifice and Blood of *Jesus*, the future *Messias*, and of his Institutions, and that

that the Things signified by them be- PART  
ing now come, those Types or Figures II.  
do by Consequence cease. And it is  
on this Foot only that the Reasonable-  
ness of the *Jewish* Revelation is de-  
fensible.

2. One or more of the mentioned Prophecies, being very clear and express with respect to the Time of the *Messiah's* Birth, caused a very great and general Expectation among the *Jews* of his Appearance about the Time of the Birth of *Jesus*. For the Learned *Jews*, long before the Birth of *Jesus* (which was about Two thousand Years after the giving of the *Jewish* Law) divided the Time of the World's Duration into Three Periods, viz. Two thousand Years before the Law, Two thousand under the Law, and Two thousand under the *Messiah* \*. And the Report of this general Expectation of the *Messias* extended itself even among the neighbouring *Pagans*, especially those of the *Eastern* Parts, as appears from the unexceptionable Testimonies of *Suetonius* and *Tacitus* †.

3. Though the *Jews* at the Time of the Appearance of *Jesus* (through Prejudice, occasioned by their misunderstanding

\* Buxtorf. Syn. Jud. p. 511.

† Sueton. in Vespas. Tacit. Hist. Lib. I.



**PART** derstanding some of the Prophecies  
**II.** which spoke of the future *Kingdom* of  
 the *Messias*, and which induced them  
 to imagine he should be a Temporal  
 Prince) refused to acknowledge and  
 receive him as the *Messias*, yet we are  
 assured that they were, about that  
 Time and since, very forward (as he  
 himself foretold) to receive others  
 who had no colourable Pretension to  
 the many and extraordinary Characters  
 of the *Messias* contained in the men-  
 tioned Prophecies. Such were *Bar*  
*Cochba*, *David el David*, *Sabbatai*  
*Sevi*, and divers others.

4. All those other Pretenders to the  
 Title and Dignity of the *Messias* hav-  
 ing proved Impostors, and no Claim  
 being kept up to the mentioned Cha-  
 racters of the *Messias* (the Time of  
 whose Appearance, according to all  
 possible Computations, is confessed to  
 be long since elapsed) but only that of  
*Jesus*, it follows, that if his Claim be  
 not allowed, no other can possibly be  
 admitted. For since the *putting an*  
*End to Sin*, was to be one End of the  
*Messiah's* Coming, certainly his Com-  
 ing could not (as the *Jews* pretend)  
 be deferred on Account of Sin. But  
 if the Claim of *Jesus* be allowed (as  
 the evident fulfilling of all those Types  
 and

and Prophecies in Him will demon-  
strate to be most reasonable) then it  
cannot but follow, that such Institu-  
tions as were peculiar to the *Jewish*  
Revelation (and were only typical) are  
indeed abrogated, and that the New  
State of Things, foretold by the an-  
cient Prophecies, is actually come;  
and likewise (as was before inferred)  
that the *Christian* Revelation is not on-  
ly a Divine Revelation, but the One-  
ly Divine Revelation which is now en-  
tirely in Force.

After what has been said, the Ob-  
jection of the *Jews* concerning the Ce-  
remonial Law being perpetual or *for*  
*ever*, cannot be allowed to have any  
Weight. For as the *Jewish* Rites and  
Ceremonies, being in themselves of no  
real Worth, could not be any Part of  
the Law of Nature (which alone is im-  
mutable in itself) so it is most unrea-  
sonable to imagine they should be rendered  
strictly Perpetual by Virtue of the free  
Ordination of God, who not only, by  
his Prophets, speaks very contemptibly  
of those Ceremonial Institutions, but  
sometimes actually dispenced with the  
Observation, and even foretold the A-  
bolition of divers of them; particular-  
ly of the Sacrifices and Festivals \*. If  
therefore

\* See Dan. ix. and Jer. i.

PART therefore the Ceremonial Law be spoken of as *Perpetual* (as it is in *Lev. xxiii.*

II. 14.) it is to be consider'd that the Word in the Original doth not necessarily import an absolute Perpetuity, but signifies according to the Nature of the Subject to which it is applied. Nor was it understood of the absolute Perpetuity of that System of Laws by the ancient *Jews*; who expected a great Change at the Coming of the *Messias*, particularly with regard to forbidden Meats: And even the *Talmud* (as quoted by *Grotius* †) teaches, that the Ceremonial Law was designed to continue no longer in Force than till the Time of the *Messias*.

But 'tis objected, that the mentioned Prophecies of the *Jewish* Revelation, tho' applied to *Jesus*, are either very darkly expressed, or did not primarily or immediately regard the *Messias*.

This may be allowed to be true of some, but not of all. Particularly (to mention no more) it is not true of that most remarkable Prophecy in the ninth Chapter of *Daniel*, which plainly fixes the Time of the *Messiah's* Appearance, giving him the Titles of the *Most Holy*, the *Bringer in of Everlasting Righteousness*, by the putting an End to Sin, and  
the

† Annot. ad Lib. V. de Ver. Chr. Relig.



*the Sealer or Fulfiller of the Prophecies.* PART

This Prediction of *Daniel* fixes the II.

Time of the *Messias*. Seventy Prophe-  
tical Weeks (or Weeks of Years) after  
the going forth of the Decree or Edict  
for Rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, and is so  
evidently fulfilled in *Jesus*, that of  
Three different Computations from  
Three several *Epoches* or Dates (ac-  
cording to three several Edicts) there  
is not one but sufficiently proves *Jesus*  
to be the *Messias* intended; as hath  
been made appear by *Sir Isaac New-*  
*ton*, *Dr. Prideaux* and *Bishop Lloyd*.  
Whereas this Prophecy, taken with all  
its Circumstances, cannot on the con-  
trary be applied to any other Person or  
Persons, as hath been proved by the  
Learned *Bishop of Coventry* and *Litch-*  
*field* in his *Vindication of his Defence*  
*of Christianity*, Vol. I. who likewise  
very copiously and learnedly answers  
the Objections of the Author of *the*  
*Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered*,  
against the Divine Authority of the  
Book of *Daniel*.

As for some other Prophecies of less  
Importance, which are applied to *Jesus*  
in the *Christian Revelation*, notwith-  
standing that they do not primarily or  
immediately regard the *Messias*, 'tis  
sufficient if they refer to the *Messias*,  
though

PART though but in a secondary Sense. That

II. the *Jews*, at the Time of *Jesus*, generally understood them to have such a Reference, may appear from the confident Appeal of *Jesus* himself, and of the Evangelists and Apostles (instructed by him) to the Testimony of those Ancient Prophecies; which, most certainly, common Sense would have restrained them from, had they not been assured that the *Jews* themselves applied them to the expected *Messias*. And that the *Jews* were not mistaken in applying those Prophetical Expressions to the *Messias*, may likewise very reasonably be concluded from the mentioned Appeal of *Jesus*, supported by his Doctrine, Miracles and Predictions; of which we are about to produce unexceptionable Proofs. Besides, 'tis unaccountable that the *Jews* should so generally agree in so applying those Prophecies, had they not been induced to it either by some extraordinary Circumstances which plainly prove them to be Excursions from the Subject primarily intended, or else by some very ancient Traditions of great Weight and Authority.

Thus by supposing (not without sufficient Reason) that some extraordinary Revelation was necessary, with regard

regard to God, we have made it appear from the Claim laid by *Christianity* to all the external Proofs of such a Revelation, joyned with a Comparison between it and the *Jewish* Revelation, that *Christianity* is not only a Divine Revelation, but likewise that it is the only extraordinary Divine Revelation which is entirely in Force. We shall now dismiss the Supposition of the Necessity of any extraordinary Divine Revelation, and shall prove directly, that the Claim of *Christianity* to all the external Proofs of a Divine Extraordinary Revelation, is just and well-grounded: Which, together with its Agreeableness to Reason, will likewise demonstrate it to be such a Revelation: As was proved.

That the Claim laid by *Christianity* to the Two main external Proofs of an extraordinary Divine Revelation is just and well-grounded, will appear partly by the Confession of the *Jews* \*, who bear Testimony to the real Wonders or *Miracles* wrought by *Jesus*, and partly from our own Experience, who are Witnesses of the fulfilling of his *Prophecies* concerning the Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, and the Propagation of his Religion throughout the World

\* Talmud in Tit. Aboda Zara.



PART World. But the Justice of it's Claim  
 II. to All the External Proofs, will fully  
 appear by the following Observations,  
 tending to prove the unexceptionable  
 Conveyance both of the *Jewish* and  
*Christian* Revelation together with the  
 Authentick Histories of all the men-  
 tion'd External Proofs of their Divine  
 Authority down to our Times.

The unquestionable Conveyance of the  
*Christian* Revelation, and of the Histo-  
 ry of the External Proofs of it's Divine  
 Authority, down to our Times, will  
 yield a sufficient Proof of the like un-  
 exceptionable Conveyance of the *Jew-  
 ish* Revelation, together with the Hi-  
 story of it's External Evidence, down  
 to the Time of *Jesus*. For had the  
*Jewish* Revelation, at that Time, been  
 in any considerable Instance, either  
 with regard to it's History or Doctrine,  
 imperfect or corrupted, we may be as-  
 sured that He (allowing him to have  
 been what the History of his own  
 Miracles and Prophecies, together  
 with his Doctrines will (alone) prove  
 him to have been) would have made a  
 Discovery of it. That the Conveyance  
 of the *Christian* Revelation, together  
 with the authentick History of it's Ex-  
 ternal Proofs, down to our Times, hath  
 been

been Unexceptionable, will appear **PART**  
from the following Remarks. **II.**

1.) Tho' *Jesus* himself committed nothing to Writing, yet it cannot reasonably be denied, that his Followers had, very early, certain Writings which were generally received as genuine, and which contained the Doctrines and History of the Founder of their Religion; the Writers of which, for the most Part, were perfectly acquainted with his Person, Doctrine and Actions, and sealed the Truth of their Testimony with their Blood.

2.) There is no Room to doubt that the true Followers of *Jesus* in general did their utmost to preserve those Writings pure and entire, in Opposition to such who might endeavour to innovate, either by altering them, or by forging and introducing spurious Writings.

3.) Though some of the Writings which compose the Canon of the *New Testament*, were not generally received at the first (as the Epistle to the *Hebrews* and the *Revelations* of St. *John*) yet these are not inconsistent with the other Books, that were first received. And about the Middle of the Fourth Century, the Council of *Laodicea* gave a Catalogue of the very same Historical

PART. cal and Doctrinal Books which are received at present. And though the Second Council of Carthage, in the Year 398, added several of the *Apo-cryphal* Books to the Canon of the *Old Testament*, yet the mentioned Canon of the *New Testament* remained the same.

4.) About that Time, those Writings were translated into most Languages, and dispers'd amongst most Nations in the World.\*

5.) Neither the Ancient nor Modern Hereticks could ever introduce any spurious Book into the Canon of the *New Testament*, nor corrupt the Text of such Books as were Genuine, to any considerable Degree, in Favour of their Opinions; for as much as enough is at present to be found in those Canonical Writings to baffle and confute them: And to corrupt the History they had little Temptation.

6.) Had the Writings which compose the Canon of the *New Testament* (or *Christian Revelation*) been at any Time corrupted in any one remarkable Instance, they must have been corrupted to a great Degree; otherwise, there could not have been at present such Harmony or Agreement among the

\* Theodoret. Serm. 50. contra Græcos.



the great Numbers of Texts which **PART**  
 relate to the same Important Points of **II.**  
 History and Doctrine. But such a  
 great Degree of Corruption was impos-  
 sible to be introduced without such a  
 general Consent as is impossible to be  
 conceived, considering the Multitude  
 of Copies, and the Diversity of Lan-  
 guages in which they were written.

7.) In Confirmation of all this, it  
 is remarkable that the numerous Quo-  
 tations from the Writings of the *New*  
*Testament*, which are to be found in  
 the Books of the *Christian* Fathers and  
 Doctors published in all Ages of the  
 Church agree sufficiently with the  
 Canonical Writings which have been  
 handed down to our Times.

As for the Books which contain the  
*Jewish* Revelation, they have been,  
 since the Time of *Jesus*, in the Hands  
 both of *Jews* and *Christians*, who have  
 served as Checks upon each other, to  
 prevent any Frauds with regard to  
 those Sacred Writings. And the Books  
 which are received as Canonical by the  
 present *Jews*, are accordingly found to  
 agree with those which have been pre-  
 served among the *Christians*.

All these Considerations, compared  
 together, amount to as full a Demon-  
 stration as any Matters of Fact are ca-  
 pable

PART pable of, that both the *Jewish* and  
 II. *Christian* Revelations have a just Claim  
 to all the External Proofs of Divine  
 Revelations, as well as that they are pre-  
 served sufficiently pure and entire.

# SECT. VI.

THOUGH the Force of our Argu-  
 ment for the Necessity of some pub-  
 lick Revelation of the Divine Will,  
 which supports one of our Proofs of  
 the Truth of *Christianity*, is such, that  
 nothing, I conceive, needs be added  
 for the Conviction of those Opposers  
 of *Revealed Religion* who acknowledge  
 a Providence, yet for the more effectual  
 Confirming of People in the Belief  
 of Divine Revelation, it may not be  
 amiss to observe here, how far the  
 Conduct of Divine Providence hath  
 always been agreeable to that Method  
 of Reasoning. For I apprehend it  
 may still be objected, that the *Chri-  
 stian* Revelation came very late into  
 the World (*viz.* when it was near  
 Four thousand Years old) and that  
 though the *Jewish* Revelation was in-  
 deed much earlier yet it was confined,  
 in a manner, to one Nation: Which  
 Facts seem but ill to suit with such a  
 Necessity with regard to God, since  
 had a publick Revelation of his Will  
 been

been necessary with regard to Him, in **PART**  
 the mentioned Case of so general a Cor- **II.**  
 ruption, we may reasonably suppose that  
 the very early Depravation of Mankind  
 would have inclined him both to pub-  
 lish a Revelation more early, and to  
 render it more extensive.

The following Remarks will give,  
 it is conceived, sufficient Light into  
 this Matter.

The History of *Moses* (which is al-  
 lowed to be the most ancient of all  
 Histories) assures us, that immediately  
 after the Creation, God revealed to  
 our common Parents the Connection  
 between Sin and Punishment; and that  
 as soon as the Corruption of the Hu-  
 man Species by Sin began, He pro-  
 ceeded to make some Discovery of a  
 future Remedy. These Revelations of  
 the Divine Will, joyned with the re-  
 cent Memory of the Creation, were  
 doubtless sufficient to have produced a  
 good Effect on the degenerate Race of  
 Men. But proving however ineffectu-  
 al, the *Mosaick* History gives room to  
 believe that another Revelation was  
 made to *Enoch*; who is said to have  
 been a Person of extraordinary Piety,  
 and who, no doubt, instructed the  
 People not only by a good Life, but  
 by his Doctrine. For that he was di-



**PART** vinely inspired, appears from the Testimony of St. Jude, who mentions a Prophecy of his concerning the Coming of *Christ* to judge the World.

**II.**

But Mankind becoming still more degenerate, *Noah*, a Preacher of Righteousness, is said to have been sent as a proper Instrument to reclaim and save from Destruction a most corrupt and vicious World.

But both these Revelations, made to *Enoch* and *Noah* (though doubtless attended with sufficient Proofs of their Divine Authority) proving ineffectual, the Consequence was an almost total Extirpation of the Human Species by the Deluge or Flood. Of which most Awful Event not only the *Mosaick* History, but the Histories and Traditions of most Nations give an Account; and even the Relicks and Monuments of it are, with good Reason, supposed to be visible to this Day.

After the Deluge, 'tis reasonable to think that the Memory of so general a Destruction of Mankind could not but strike a Terror into the succeeding Generations, and by retaining them within the Bounds of Duty, render any other extraordinary Revelation, for a Time, unnecessary. But the Memory of this great Calamity wearing off to a greater

greater Degree than could well have PART  
been imagined in so short a Space, and II.  
other Revelation is said to have been  
made to *Abraham*; and afterwards  
more fully to *Moses* and the other Pro-  
phets: Which was confirmed by extra-  
ordinary Signs and Wonders. The  
Theatre on which those Wonders were  
chiefly wrought, was *Egypt*; the Seat,  
at that Time, of the most Polite and  
Famous Nation in the World. So that  
the Fame of what happened there  
could not fail of spreading far and  
near; and the Revelation which had  
been made to *Abraham* (whose Poste-  
rity were a long time Servants there,  
could not but be enquired into by the  
Curious *Egyptians*. And it is very pro-  
bable, that the Doctrine of One God,  
the Creator and Governour of All  
Things, was by that Means derived to  
the neighbouring Nations by such Fo-  
reigners who came into *Egypt* to be in-  
structed in the *Egyptian* Mysteries;  
especially by the *Greeks*, from whom  
most other Nations borrowed their  
Learning and Civility. So that this  
Revelation, made to *Abraham* and *Mo-  
ses* (though chiefly designed for the Be-  
nefit of *Abraham's* Posterity) appears  
to have had no inconsiderable Influ-  
ence, even then, on a great Part of the  
G 4 World;

PART World; and no doubt but its Influence

II. became yet more extensive afterwards  
 by Means both of the Conquests and  
 Captivities of *Abraham's* Posterity, and  
 by the Famous Navigations or Voy-  
 ages of the *Phœnicians*. This may ap-  
 pear from some remarkable Fragments  
 not only of the *Mosaick* History, but  
 likewise of the *Mosaick* Law, which  
 have been preserved among most Na-  
 tions \*.

At last, in an Age when Vice and  
 Irreligion (notwithstanding all the  
 Checks of former Revelations and of  
 Philosophy) were arriv'd at an uncom-  
 mon Height, the most Perfect, as well  
 as the most Extensive Revelation was  
 made by *Jesus Christ*, and confirmed  
 not only by the Revelations of *Moses*  
 and the other Prophets, but by such  
 Miracles and other Extraordinary  
 Proofs, as ought to give Satisfaction to  
 all future Ages. But it is to be ob-  
 served, that though this last publick  
 Revelation is alone styled the *Christian*  
 Revelation, yet all the former Reve-  
 lations appear to have been so many  
 less perfect Revelations of *Christ*. 'Tis  
 likewise further remarkable, that tho'  
 the most perfect Revelation came late  
 into

\* Vid. Grot. Lib. 1. de Ver. Christ. Relig.



into the World, and, perhaps, never PART  
reach'd, properly speaking, to every II.  
Nation in it, yet the Benefits obtained  
by *Christ* for Mankind, extended (as  
we have great Reason to believe) not  
only forwards to the End of Time, but  
backwards to the First Ages of the  
World; not only to some Particular  
Nations, but, in greater or lesser De-  
grees, to All in general.

## SECT. VII.

HAVING sufficiently displayed the  
Evidence of the External Proofs of  
*Christianity*, we shall now proceed to  
a particular Consideration of it's Prin-  
cipal Doctrines and Laws, and shall  
endeavour to shew their Reasonable-  
ness; in order to clear the main *Inter-  
nal* Proof, which we have good Ground  
to think is not wanting where all the  
External Proofs are to be found.

The Doctrines which are generally  
reputed the most Essential to *Chri-  
stianity*, and which, though clearly re-  
vealed, have most exercised the Wits  
of Men in Explaining the Manner of  
them, are those of the *Trinity*, the  
*Fall*, the *Resurrection*, *eternal Punish-  
ment*, and some others reducible to  
them: Of which we shall treat in their  
Order, as far as the Sacred Writings  
shall

**PART** shall appear to leave Room for modest  
**II.** Conjecture and Reasoning.

Though nothing is more plainly asserted in the *Christian* (as well as the *Jewish*) Revelation than the *Unity* of the Godhead, yet 'tis most certain there are *Three* to whom the Names, Titles and Attributes of God are sometimes ascribed, and who are represented as acting with reference not only to the Creatures, but to each other. This plainly imports somewhat more than such a Trinity of mere *Names*, or even *Relations*, as some have imagined, and yet less than a Trinity of Proper Divine Beings, as others have (at least by Implication) asserted. 'Tis therefore very natural, in the first Place, to enquire, whether those Names and Titles are given to *Three* in the same Sense, and whether the Attributes ascribed to *All*, are such as are Incommunicable to any Inferiour Nature. For if the Names and Titles given to *Three* are given in a Proper Sense to *One* only, or if the Attributes ascribed to *Three*, appear to be independently possess'd but by *One*, and to have been communicated by Him to the Others, 'tis plain that the Being to which the Divine Names, Titles, and Attributes belong Properly and Independently, is alone  
 God,

God, and by Consequence, that the *Christian* Revelation asserts nothing but what is perfectly consistent with the Unity of God, and agreeable to Reason. However, if, on the contrary, it doth not appear that the *Christian* Revelation ascribes them thus Properly and Independently to One Only, we must not presently conclude that *Christianity* (an Institution which appears to be attested by the most unexceptionable External Proofs) contains what is Inconsistent or Unreasonable, but proceed to make a farther Enquiry.


The Hypotheses which import that the Divine Names, Titles and Attributes are (either All or Some of them) ascribed to the Second and Third in the Sacred Trinity in a different Sense from that in which they are ascribed to the First, are those of the *Arians* and *Socinians*. The genuine Disciples of *Arius* assert, that the *Christian* Trinity consists of One Uncreated, and Two Created Natures. The Followers of *Socinus* contend that it consists or One Uncreated, and One Created Nature, and of a certain Divine Virtue of Quality. But against both these Opinions there lies this very Reasonable Objection (among divers others)

viz.



PART viz. that the so frequent ascribing of  
 II. the Divine Names, Titles and Attri-  
 butes to mere Creatures by a Divine  
 Revelation, would be very unaccount-  
 able, when a Revelation which is like-  
 wise confessed to be Divine, assures us,  
 that God will not give his Glory to Ano-  
 ther. Besides, the Patrons of both  
 these Hypotheses (the Socinians espe-  
 cially) are obliged to use such Arts to  
 reconcile (as it were) the Scriptures to  
 their Schemes, that it gives too much  
 Ground to suspect that they are far from  
 being favoured by those Sacred Books.

As for such who seem to suppose  
 the Second and Third of the Holy  
 Trinity to result from the First by a  
 properly Eternal Emanation, though  
 they find not so much Difficulty to re-  
 concile their Opinion to the Letter of  
 the Scriptures, yet they cannot per-  
 haps, so easily reconcile it to Reason.  
 For as whatever is Eternal is Necessa-  
 ry, so the Necessity of an Eternal Es-  
 sence could not result from the Free  
 or Indetermined Action of any Will.  
 Consequently, if we suppose an Eter-  
 nal Essence was derived from another  
 Eternal Essence, it's Necessity must be  
 conceived to have had the very same  
 Original Foundation or Reason with  
 the Necessity of that Essence from  
 which

which it is supposed to have been de- PART I  
rived, and on which it depended. But II.  
this seems inconsistent with Reason.   
For the Foundation or Reason of the  
Necessity of the Original or Independ-  
ent Essence, was (as we have proved)  
One and Uniform \*, and nothing less  
than the Utmost or Greatest Perfection;  
but this could not be the Foundation or  
Reason of the Necessity of Divers Ef-  
fences of Greater and Lesser Perfecti-  
on; much less of Three rather than  
of More or Fewer.

From hence it follows, that Eternity  
or Necessity (with regard to Existence)  
was incommunicable; or could not be-  
long to any but the Supreme or Inde-  
pendent Essence; and that therefore if  
it be ascribed by those Divines to the  
Second and Third Persons of the Sacred  
Trinity as Properly as to the First,  
they must allow them, together with  
the First, to be the One Supreme Be-  
ing, or God in the most Proper Sense.

Since therefore a Trinity of Person-  
alities in the Divine Being appears  
necessary to be asserted, it seems we  
must proceed and consider how the Di-  
vine Nature may admit of such a Tri-  
nity in sufficient Consistence with its  
Unity.

But

\* See the Preface.

PART II. But, by the way, we cannot avoid taking Notice of an Hypothesis which has been lately revived by a certain Ingenious Author \*: which Hypothesis imports, that the Entire Divine Nature is the First, and only Proper, Person of the Sacred Trinity, and that Two Powers of the same Nature (which are Figuratively represented as Persons) are the Second and Third of that Trinity. But 'tis easy to remark, that this is not a Proper Trinity in the Divine Nature, but a *Duality* only, and that not of Persons, but of Powers. Besides, whereas one would imagine that when it is said, *There are Three that bear witness in Heaven*, these Three should be as properly Three as the Three which are afterwards said to *bear witness on Earth*, yet (if this Opinion be true) the First Heavenly Witness includes Both the Others, as certainly as the Entire Divine Nature includes Both the mentioned Divine Powers. 'Tis likewise somewhat unaccountable that we should be Baptized in the Names of a Person, and of Two Powers which constitute that very Person. It may further be objected against the Supposition of merely Figurative Persons, that it is impossible

\* Mr. Watts, in his Dissertations on the Trinity.



impossible to imagine, that the inspir'd **PART**  
 Writers of the *New Testament* (though **II.**  
 their Style in some Cases, is, accord-  
 ing to the Custom of the *Jews* and o-  
 ther Eastern Nations, sufficiently Figu-  
 rative) should be directed to carry on a  
 Figurative Style throughout a whole  
 Scheme of the last Importance, in  
 which Scheme, if in any, it was ne-  
 cessary to guard against Mistakes tend-  
 ing to *Polytheism*; especially since they  
 writ not for the Eastern Nations only,  
 but used the *Greek Language*, which  
 was then become almost Universal, and  
 published their Writings for the Bene-  
 fit not only of that, but of all future  
 Ages.

It seems then, that this is not the  
*Christian Trinity*; which we have Rea-  
 son to believe is a Proper Trinity in  
 the Divine Nature. Let us therefore  
 proceed; and, for as much as this Do-  
 ctrine appears to be of greater Antiqui-  
 ty than the Writings of the *New Testa-  
 ment*, let us trace it up to the more  
 early Ages of the World.

If we consult *Pagan Antiquity*, it  
 will appear, that there has been a very  
 early Tradition concerning a Trinity in  
 the Divine Nature. This may partly  
 be inferred from the *Orpheick Verses*,  
 which mention the *Θεὸς Ἄγας* and the

PART Ἀδὲν Πατρὸς, *The Divine Word or Reason*

II. and the Voice of the Father. And Py-

thagoras, who travelled much, and (as Porphyry assures us) conversed with the Chaldeans and Jews, appears to have derived from them a Notion of such a Trinity: For he is said to have applied the Number *Three*, (as the most perfect Number) to the Supreme God \*. And accordingly, the Three first Principles of the *Pythagorick* Τετρακτύς or *Quaternity* (the Fourth of which, viz. *Matter*, was nothing Divine) were the very same with those Divine Principles which composed the *Platonick Trinity*. As for *Plato*, he assures us in his *Philebus*, that he had received a Tradition not only concerning the Unity of God, but likewise concerning a Trinity in that Unity, from the Ancients: Which Trinity his Followers expressed by the Terms *Father*, *Mind*, (*Word* or *Son*), and *Spirit* (or *Soul of the World*.) This Tradition he himself calls the Tradition of the ἑν καὶ πάλλα, One and Many (or various †). And though some have imagined that Two of the Principles which composed *Plato's Trinity*, were

\* Servius ad Eclog. Sept.

† In the same restrain'd Sense *Sabellius* is said by St. *Basil* to have styled the Trinity, ἑν καὶ πάλλα, or one Thing under various Denominations.

were supposed to be Creatures, yet the PART  
contrary appears both from his own II.  
Words (which import that the Deity  
which is One, is likewise Various)  
and also from the Testimonies of his  
Two eminent Disciples, *Plotinus* and  
*Porphyrie*.

As for the *Jews*, 'tis observed, that though some of their less ancient Writers (usually called *Rabbinical*) speak of a Sort of Trinity in the Godhead under the Notion of Three *Middoth* or Properties, yet none of those that are the more ancient (*i. e.* neither the Writers of the *Old Testament*, nor of the *Apocrypha*, nor even of the *Targums*) make the least mention of a Trinity of any Sort. They speak indeed of the *Word* and *Son of God* as of a Divine Person; but not so of the *Spirit*. This may well appear somewhat strange and surprizing, since we have the Testimony of *Jamblicus* (the Disciple of *Porphyrie*) that *Plato* borrowed his Notion of the Trinity from the *Jews*. But the true Solution of this Difficulty seems to be this, *viz.* that the *Jews* learned not the Doctrine of the Trinity from any of their more ancient Writers, but received it by Oral Tradition from the more early Ages of the World.

H—y

This



PART. This most ancient Doctrine (the  
 II. Knowledge of it being since become  
 ~~~~~ of greater Importance) is plainly confirmed by the Inspired Writers of the *New Testament*, who distinguish the Persons of the Trinity by the Names of the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Spirit*.

Thus much may be sufficient with regard to the History of this Traditional Doctrine of Three Divine Persons, and the Authorities by which it is supported. We may now proceed to consider it's Agreeableness to Reason.

It must be confessed, that the Introducers of the *Latin* Words *Persona* and *Personalitas* (as well as of the *Greek* *ὑπόστασις* in the present Sense) met with great Opposition in the Church. And though the Learned, being convinced by so many Texts of Scripture which ascribe Personal Actions to the Sacred Three, have long since received those Terms, yet the Divine Persons must be allowed to be of a somewhat different Kind from all other Persons. For with regard to Created Persons, (or Intelligent, or Conscious Agents) not only a Distinction of Substance, but of Consciousness too is to be understood by *Personality*: Whereas 'tis allowed, that

that neither of these Distinctions can take place with regard to Divine Persons. PART II.

That some Sort of Trinity in the Divine Nature, is not only possible, but, according to our Conceptions, necessary, may appear from the following Remarks.

1. The Opinion of the *Absolute Simplicity* of the Divine Being (as importing the Real Identity of the Divine Perfections with each other and the Common Nature) has, 'tis humbly conceived, been made appear elsewhere \*, to be altogether Groundless: And, I think, 'tis now generally given up as Indefensible.

2. The Absolute Necessity with which the Divine Nature exists, has been proved in the *Preface*, to be founded in the Utmost Internal Perfection. Consequently, the Divine Nature, since it includes the Utmost Perfection, cannot but include whatever Distinction is contained in the Nature of Perfection.

3. If therefore the Nature of Perfection necessarily includes or contains a Trine Distinction, then a Trinity must be allowed to be necessary in the Divine or most perfect Nature.

H 2

If

\* *Impartial Inquiry*, p. 190.

**PART II.** If it be asked, What Reason we have to imagine that the Nature of Perfection includes or contains a Trinity rather than a Quaternity, or any other Limited or Determinate Number, it must indeed be confessed, that we cannot produce Demonstration for it, because our Idea of Perfection cannot be demonstrated to be Adequate. But it may, at the same time, be affirmed, that according to the best Idea we can form of Perfection, it appears to include in itself, and by Consequence to infer in the Being to which it belongs, Three Powers or Principles of Action to which all our other Internal Ideas of it are reducible. These (according to the inverted Order in which we elsewhere \* demonstrated them to belong to the Divine Being) were observed to be *Selfactivity* or a Principle of External Action, *Intelligence* (or rather *Wisdom*, which includes in it's Idea more than pure Intelligence) and *Liberty*, or an Independent, Elective, Self-determining Power, capable of influencing and governing the Natural Activity with regard to External Action. Which Powers or Faculties bear some Analogy or Resemblance to *Executive*

\* Impartial Enquiry. p. 28.



*cutive Power, Understanding* (or rather **PART**  
*Reason*, which is an Active Principle, **II.**  
and includes more than pure Under-  
standing or Intelligence) and *Will* or  
Volitive Power, in ourselves, who, as  
the Scripture informs us, were created  
in the Divine Image. And it is most  
certain, that we cannot conceive either  
any more or fewer Powers or Faculties  
than these Three to contribute to the  
Perfection of an Intelligent Being as  
such. For perfectly to Perceive and  
Judge, freely to Will or Choose, and  
effectually to Execute, Comprehend  
whatever comes within our Notion of  
Power. So that a Trinity (though it  
seems to be a Sort of Limitation) ap-  
pears to be included in the very Nature  
of Perfection.

That this Trinity, which (if we  
think rightly) cannot but be supposed  
to belong to the Nature of the most  
Perfect Being, may, not improperly,  
be stiled a *Trinity of Persons*, will 'tis  
humbly conceived, appear from the  
following Considerations.

1.) Though there must be conceiv-  
ed some Analogy between the Powers  
or Faculties of All Intelligent Beings,  
yet it may not be unreasonable to sup-  
pose as great a Difference between the  
Powers or Faculties of the most perfect

**PART II.** Being and those of his Creatures, as can well consist with such Analogy.

2.) Whatever is conceived to be natural to the Eternal (or Absolutely Necessary and Most Perfect) Being, must likewise be conceived as Absolutely Necessary, and by Consequence, as Most Perfect.

3.) Therefore, as the Foundation of the Distinction between the Powers and Faculties of the Divine (or Eternal) Being must (since it is natural) be, conceived to be Absolutely Necessary it must likewise be conceived to be the most perfect or real Foundation of Distinction that can possibly consist with the Unity of the Divine Nature, and the Unity of the Divine Nature must, for the same Reason, be conceived to be the most perfect or real Unity that can possibly consist with that Distinction.

4.) We observe in our own Minds Three Faculties or Powers or Principles of Action, which (according to the Order wherein they sometimes act in us) are *Will*, *Reason* and *Effective Power*, and which, though they are so far united as they subsist in One and the same Being, yet no Man, I suppose, can doubt but they might have been  
more

more strictly united, had it seemed good to the Great Creator. PART II.

5.) Let us now, with the utmost Reverence, suppose (what has elsewhere been proved) that there are Three Principles of Action in the Divine, or Eternal, Being, which bear some Analogy or Resemblance to these Three which we experience in ourselves (and which we cannot but conceive to be both Necessary and Sufficient to the Perfection of every Intelligent Being, as such) viz. First, A Perfect Elective and Self-determining Principle; which we expressed by *Liberty* or Freedom of Will. Secondly, A Perfect Imaginative Principle or Source of Ideas (which Principle we cannot but conceive as somewhat distinct from and perfective of pure Intelligence, Understanding or Consciousness, and which, together with Intelligence, may be termed *Wisdom*;) and Lastly, A Perfect Executive Principle, which we termed *Self-activity*.

6.) These Three Divine Powers or Principles of Action, must (as was proved) be conceived to be united in the most Perfect or Real Manner possible.

7.) In order to their being conceived as united in the most Perfect or Real



PART Manner possible, they must be sup-

II. posed not only to subsist in the same Being (as do the Three aforementioned Powers or Faculties in ourselves) but likewise to partake (if I may so express it) of the same Common Intelligence or Consciousness. For that this is a possible Supposition, is plain; because Pure Intelligence is no distinct active Principle or Power, and therefore may be conceived to belong in common to the Three mentioned Divine Powers or Principles of Action.

8.) Though our Elective Power or Will, having no Consciousness or Intelligence, is no other than *Facultas Cæca* (or a Blind Power or Faculty) and therefore depends on the Understanding, whenever we act regularly; yet the Divine Will, being a Perfect, Independent, Elective and Self-determining Principle endued with Perfect Intelligence, cannot but be always the First Principle of Action in the Divine Being; as a perfect Imaginative Principle (which, superadded to Intelligence or Understanding, may be termed *Wisdom* and *Reason*) cannot but be the Second, and a Perfect Executive Principle the Third.

9.) These

9.) These Three perfect Powers or PART Principles of Action (*viz.* the *Elective* II. or *Volitive*, the *Imaginative* and the *Executive*) thus necessarily distinguished, and yet as necessarily united, in One common Intelligent Nature, and acting jointly and harmoniously in a certain most regular Order, are, perhaps, what is meant by the Divine Trinity.

10.) The same Trinity of Divine Active Principles, being most really distinct, tho' mutually conscious and subsisting in One Intelligent Nature, may, 'tis humbly supposed, with sufficient Propriety, be termed *Persons*. For separate Subsistence and a distinct Consciousness or Intelligence, are, it it seems, in no Case to be conceived necessary to constitute a distinct Person, but only when (as in Created Beings) a sufficient Distinction cannot be conceived without them. Whereas in the Divine Being; notwithstanding the most perfect Unity as to Substance and Consciousness, there cannot but be the most Real (because the most Necessary) Distinction between the Conscious Principles: As was proved.

That it is very reasonable to suppose a Distinction between the *Will* or *Volitive Power*, and the *Executive* or *Effective Power* in the Divine Being,

PART is clear; for as much as it is impossible  
 II. for us to conceive how a pure Act of  
 the Will can effect any Thing. Therefore when 'tis said, that with God to Will is to Effect, we cannot conceive it to have any other Meaning than that the Divine Being never wants Power to render the Acts of the Will efficacious.

In perfect Consistence with this Scheme, we find that the First Person of the Sacred Trinity is represented as the Prime Agent or First-moving Principle and Cause of All Things. The Second Person hath the Character of the *Word, Reason or Wisdom*, by which (as by a Rule or Instrument) *the Worlds were made*. He is said, to be *the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*; for as much as Humane Reason is as a Ray of the Divine Light or Wisdom. And in our Saviour, whose Humanity is peculiarly united to the Second Person, *All the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are*, said to be, *bidden*. The Third Person is likewise very consistently represented as the Divine *Executive Principle*, or as the Divine Virtue or Influence working on and in the Creatures. He is said at the Creation to have *moved on the Face of the Waters*. He is said, to have *spoken*  
 by



by the Prophets, and to have inspired all PART  
 the Sacred Writers; and, in short, to II.  
 be the immediate Author of every ex-  
 traordinary Work, and the Giver of  
 every valuable Gift. And 'tis remark-  
 able, that the Third Person, or Holy  
 Spirit, when represented properly as  
 the *Divine Executive Principle* (and  
 not figuratively as the Effects of it) has  
 sometimes Intelligence or Consciof-  
 ness emphatically ascribed to him in a  
 proper Sense, as well as the First and  
 Second: As when 'tis said, *The Spirit*  
*searcheth all Things, even the deep Things*  
*of God.* Which sufficiently demon-  
 strates his proper Personality.

But here I apprehend it may be que-  
 ried, If the *Divine Will* (or *Volitive*  
*Power*) be the *Active Principle* repre-  
 sented under the Character of the *Fa-*  
*ther* or First Person of the Sacred Tri-  
 nity, how comes *Will* to be ascribed to  
 the Holy Spirit or Third Person, as  
 distinguished from the Father? Is He  
 not said to *distribute Gifts to every Man*  
*severally as he will?* 1 Cor. xii. 11.

I answer, This is no real Difficulty.  
 For even Inanimate Things, in the Fi-  
 gurative Style (which is so frequently  
 used in the Scriptures) have sometimes  
 Will and other Vital Powers ascribed  
 to them. For Example: A Will is  
 ascribed

**PART** ascribed to the Wind; for 'tis said, *The*

**II.** *Wind bloweth where it listeth*, i. e. where it will. Much rather then may Will in the Figurative Style, be ascribed to the Holy Spirit, who is a properly Vital Principle. Nor can the Personality of the Holy Spirit be therefore said to be imperfect, because without a distinct *Will* or *Volitive Power*. For a *Volitive Power* is not necessary to the Perfection of the Personality, though it be necessary to the Perfection of the Nature or Essence. Only Intelligence is necessary to Personality; for as much as an *Intelligent Supposit* (or Subject) is allowed to be a perfect Person.

It may be further objected, that if there is but One Divine *Will* or *Volitive Faculty*, and if that *Will* is what is represented to us under the Character of the *Father*, it then follows, that the Second and Third Persons cannot act any otherwise than as they are influenced by the *Father* or First Person.

I answer, This Objection is so far from casting any Obscurity on the Doctrine of the Sacred Trinity, that, according to the present Scheme, it greatly illustrates it.

'Tis generally agreed, that there is but One *Divine Will* or *Volitive Power*, and from thence 'tis usually inferred,

red,

red, that whatever is will'd, is will'd **PART**  
by all the Divine Persons in one indivisible Act. But, according to this Inference, it cannot be apprehended how the Divine Actions should be primarily ascribed to the Father, as we find they are. Whereas, if the Divine Principle of Willing be what is meant by the *Father*, then it may very well be conceived, how all the Divine Actions should be thus primarily ascribed to Him, as being the First-moving Principle. It may then very well be conceived how the *Father* should be said to have *Created the Worlds* by his Word and Spirit, to have *sent* the Son, and to have *sent* and *poured out* the Spirit, and the like. And thus the seeming Subordination of the Three Co-equal and Coessential Persons in the Divine Oeconomy, will, on this Supposition, be sufficiently accounted for. Which cannot but reflect great Light on this Venerable Doctrine.

Lastly, Some may object, that this Scheme revives the Heresy of the *Monothelites*, who supposed but One Will in *Christ*: To which, I reply, That the Opinion of the *Monothelites* proceeded from their confounding the Two Natures in *Christ*; but no such thing is done by the present Scheme, and consequently,



PART II. **sequently, it excludes both the Absurdity and Impiety of their Opinion.**

This Scheme perfectly agrees with the Terms in which the Divine Trinity is expressed by *Philo* the Jew, who flourished in the Reign of *Caligula*, soon after our Saviour's Crucifixion, and who has left us the fullest and clearest Account of the Traditional Doctrine of the ancient Synagogue concerning this Matter. For he represents the Trinity under the Notions of,

1.) *Dominion*, or the Governing Principle (*Ἀρχή* or *Ἐξουσία* or *τὸ Δεσποτικόν*.)

2) *Reason* (*Λόγος*) which he says was the Instrument wherewith God (*viz.* the *Father*) made the Worlds, and which he notwithstanding calls *God*. He likewise represents the Second Principle as the Uniting Principle, or the Band of Union between the First and Third: Which is particularly remarkable, and cannot perhaps be imagined to have been for any other Reason than this, *viz.* because the Intelligence, or mutual Consciousness which unites the Sacred Three, was conceived by the *Jews* to be (as it were) Radically or Fundamentally in the Second Principle; for as much as Intelligence or Consciousness is included in the very Notion of *Reason*.

3.) *Goodness*

3.) Goodness (*Ἀγαθότης*) or Beneficence PART II.  
 (Ἐυεργασία) or the Operative Principle of All Good. ~

The like Agreement may be observed with regard to the Doctrine of the *Platonists*, who, (as we may gather from *Chalcidius* \*) represented the Trinity (the Order being only somewhat inverted) under the Notions of *The Commanding Principle*, *The Ordering and Disposing Principle*, and, *The Insinuating Principle*, or *the Soul of the World*, which actuates the entire Frame of Nature. Which Expressions both of *Philo* and the *Platonists* are plainly reducible to the *Volitive*, *Imaginative* and *Executive Powers*.

So that here seems to be a very remarkable Concurrence of Scripture, Reason and the Testimony of Antiquity. The Evidence from Reason may be summed up thus: Whatever is necessarily included in the most Rational Conception that we can form of Perfection, may, and must be supposed by us to be included in the Nature of the Divine or most Perfect Being. But a Trinity of Personalities is necessarily included in the most Rational Conception that we can form of Perfection. Therefore a Tri-  
nity

\* *Chalcid. ad Timæum.*

**PART** nity of Persons may, and must be supposed by us to be included in the Nature of the Divine or most Perfect Being. Consequently, the Trinity of Persons which is taught by the *Christian Revelation*, ought to be so far from prejudicing us against *Christianity*, that it ought rather to recommend it to our Belief and Esteem.

As for the Communication of the Divine Essence from the Father to the Son, and from Both to the Holy Spirit by Eternal Generation and Spiration, 'tis an Opinion that appears to have been chiefly propagated by the less ancient Fathers and the Schoolmen. For as the Scriptures yield no Proof, so 'tis well known that many of the most ancient Fathers \*, are wholly silent as to such a Communication. On the contrary, those Fathers (who seem to have had no Notion of an Eternal Ideal World) are observed to represent the Generation of the Son as Temporary, and as something analogous to the forming of an Idea in the Mind. For an Idea formed through the Influence of the Will, becomes, as it were, the Issue or Off-spring of the Will. Now, though the Opinion of these primitive Fathers proves

\* Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, Hippolytus, Tertullian, &c.



proves nothing in a positive Way, yet it must be allowed, to make it highly probable in the Negative, that there was no genuine Tradition of such Communication of the Divine Essence in the primitive Church. So that here the Silence both of Scripture and Oral Tradition appears to leave sufficient Room for Conjecture and Reasoning.

PART II.

As for the Union between the Second Person of the Sacred Trinity and the Humane Nature of *Christ* (which is freely confessed, to be Part of the *Christian Revelation*) all that we are required by the Scriptures to believe is :

1.) That God being willing to discover the Heinousness or Evil of Sin, and at the same Time, to set both his Justice and his Mercy in the clearest Light, insisted on a Propitiation or Atonement by Sacrifice.

2.) That One of Humane Race, who was perfectly Innocent, and united to the Second of the Sacred Three, became a Voluntary Sacrifice for the Attainment of those Ends.

As to what regards the Manner of this Union between a Divine Person and the Humanity of *Christ*, all that the Scriptures direct us to believe, is humbly conceived to be no more than this.

I

1.) That

PART I.) That the Humanity of *Christ*  
 II. was in such a peculiar Manner, as it  
 ~~~~~ were, inhabited by the Deity, and so  
 particularly assumed by the *Logos* or Second Person (yet without Confusion of Properties) that his Body is styled a Temple, and the Divine *Logos*, or *Word*, or *Reason*, is said (in a Figurative Sense) to have been *made Flesh*, and to have *dwelt amongst Men*.

2.) That, upon this Inhabitation and Union, very wonderful Works were done, and such Words were uttered as no mere Creature could have spoken of himself without the utmost Impiety and Blasphemy.

3.) That by Virtue of this Union (which is Personal and Perpetual) *Christ* was qualified (agreeably to the ancient Types and Prophecies not only to give Satisfaction by suffering for the Sins of Men, but likewise to assume the Divine Names, Titles and Attributes, and to become a proper Object of Religious Worship.

What there is in this Account that can be justly termed Unreasonable, 'tis impossible to conceive. If therefore such a Personal Union as infers no Confusion of Properties (which Sort of Union no Man can prove to be a Contradiction or absolute Impossibility) appears to be

be taught by a Revelation, so well at-  
tested, and in every respect so worthy  
of God, it ought to be believed with  
the utmost Humility and Gratitude.

PART  
II.  
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SECT. VIII.

ANOTHER Important Article of the  
*Christian Revelation*, which has been  
misrepresented as Absurd or Unrea-  
sonable, is that of the *Fall*.

Though, with some Men of Let-  
ters, we should allow the History of  
the *Fall*, in the *Old Testament*, to be,  
in some Respects, Allegorical, yet even  
the Allegory must be supposed to  
be founded on some real Fact, and can  
import no less, than that our Common  
Parents did actually disobey some Di-  
vine Command.

That *Adam* in disobeying that Com-  
mand acted as a publick Person, or as  
the Common Representative of his  
Natural Posterity is usually and clearly  
inferred from several Expressions to be  
met with in the *New Testament* (par-  
ticularly in *Rom.* ver. 15. to ver. 20.)  
But there is sufficient Room for Dis-  
pute concerning the Consequences of  
his Disobediences in that publick Ca-  
pacity. For though it is abundantly  
pear that there was an Imputation of  
*Adam's* Offence to all his Natural Po-  
sterity



PART sterity, (as likewise of the Righteous-  
 II. ness of *Christ*, (of whom *Adam* is said  
 ~~~~~ to have been a Type or Figure) to All  
 his Spiritual Off-spring) yet there are  
 many Reasons which may incline one  
 to suppose, it's Consequences were no  
 more than Exclusion from the Terre-  
 stial Paradise, together with Corporal  
 Death and other Temporal Evils.

This Hypothesis, is what I shall un-  
 dertake (with all due Submission) to  
 defend and illustrate. For neither the  
 Nature of God, nor of the Offence  
 committed (it being, as it seems, not  
 the Transgression of a Natural Law,  
 but of a Positive Precept, the Impor-  
 tance of which was, probably, un-  
 known) appears to admit of a greater  
 Penalty than what is Corporal and  
 Temporal : As we shall more particu-  
 larly observe elsewhere. Besides, if the  
 Consequences of *Adam's* Offence were  
 any thing more than Temporal Penal-  
 ties, how could God's *Free Gift* be said  
 to have so much abounded as the Apo-  
 stle *Paul*, Rom. v. 15. affirms it did?  
 If, as some suppose, the Temporal  
 Death of All his Posterity (some Few  
 only excepted) the Spiritual Death of  
 All his Natural or Ordinary Descen-  
 dants, and the Eternal Death of the  
 far greater Part (not excepting Infants)  
 be

be the Consequences of *Adam's* Sin, PART  
how can the Effects of *Christ's* Satisf- II.  
faction be said to exceed, to equal, or

even to come into Competition with them? Whereas, if (agreeably to the plain Sense of the Scriptures) we suppose the Consequences of *Adam's* Offence to have been only the Forfeiture of the Happiness of the Paradisiacal State, Corporal Death and other Temporal Evils, this great Difficulty, as well as others, will be removed, and the Doctrine of the Fall, will, perhaps, be found to be not only reconcileable to, but to contain the clearest Display of the Wisdom, Goodness and Justice of God. For, on this Supposition, we may conceive Matters to have stood thus:

The Almighty having decreed to produce a Creature qualified for Immortality, who was to be the Root of an entire Species of Beings; and foreseeing that, (since they were designed to be Intelligent and Free Agents) it was possible that many (if not All) of them might (in their peculiar Circumstances) fall short of their Chief Happiness, (which, as we have observed, could not but be connected with Obedience to the Creator's Will; ) and being not inclined to expose a whole Species to so

**PART** great a Danger: It therefore pleased  
**II.** him to appoint their Common Parent  
 (who on divers Accounts could not fail of being better qualified than any of his Natural Posterity) to be, for once, their Representative. On his Obedience, he decreed to repute them All obedient; and, in case of his Disobedience, to look on them All (tho' without their Consent) as Parties in the same Offence. That he might justly do so, he ordained that the Loss of Paradise, Death and the other ordinary Temporal Evils which were to be the Penalty annex'd to their Common Parent's Disobedience, should be more than recompensed by a much greater Good. For in case of Disobedience, he ordained that (after divers preparatory Revelations of his Will) One of Humane Race (being qualified in an extraordinary Manner for that Purpose) should become both a perfect Teacher and Example of Vertue and Obedience, and likewise a Sacrifice; not only to shew the Heinousness of Disobedience in general, but to expiate the Guilt of future Disobedience, which (not without his Consent) should be imputed to Him. And in Consideration of his superabundant Merits, it pleased God not only to decree to raise the Bodies of  
 of



of Men from the Sleep of Death, but PART  
to elect some of the Humane Race to II.  
Certain, Eternal Happiness (to be en-  
joyed after Death in a better World) and likewise to ordain that even those who were not thus elected, should be ordinarily favoured with such a particular State of Trial, wherein they should be rendered capable of Forgiveness and eternal Happiness, even after manifold, repeated personal Offences, in certain Cases, and on certain Conditions; in the Performance of which they might expect a Supply of Divine Aid, and to the Performance of which even Death and all the other Temporal Evils, which were the Consequences of the Fall should be rendered subservient. And as for the Case of Infants and others who are incapable of the State of Trial, we can (according to these Principles) have no Reason to doubt of their eternal Happiness.

This Explanation (which is chiefly built on the Principle, that Free or Indetermined Acts, are no capable Objects of Necessary or Determinate Foreknowledge \*) as it clears the Difficulties with reference to the Fall and Restitution of Man, so it yields a satisfactory

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\* Impartial Enquiry, p. 91, 182.

PART factory Account of the Fall and Ruin

II. of the Apostate Angels (which are

Two other important Discoveries made by the *Christian Revelation*.) And these Events by being compared, will, we conceive, sufficiently illustrate each other.

The Scriptures represent God's ordaining an Expiation in the Case of lapsed or fallen Man, as a peculiar Instance of his Goodness. They inform us, That though those superiour Beings known to us by the Name of Angels, fell in great Numbers from their Original State, thro' Disobedience to the Will of the Supreme Lawgiver, yet He never pitied them so far as to afford them any extraordinary Means of Recovery from their lapsed State. Which different Conduct towards Beings who were so very Noble and Valuable a Part of the Creation, may be accounted for not only from the aggravating Circumstances with which their Disobedience was attended, but likewise from their wanting a Common Representative. For as the Humane Species, who without their Consent, were subjected to the Penalty incurred by their Representative, were more pitiable than the Angels, who became guilty through the Obliquity of their own

own Wills; so the Divine Conduct in PART  
thus subjecting Mankind to innumera- II.  
ble Calamities for the Offence of another, would not have appeared so reconcileable to our Notions of perfect Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, had it not been rendered the Means of some greater Good. \* Notwithstanding which, *Christ* may be very fitly styled the *Free Gift* of God, in as much as nothing but the pure Goodness of God could dispose him to provide so superabundant a Compensation for the Evils occasioned by the Fall of the Humane Representative.

The Reasons which we may suppose to have inclined the Beneficent Creator to appoint a Common Representative for Men and not for Angels, are such as follow:

1.) The Humane Species was to be successively propagated; but the Angels co-existed, as being all of them the Products of immediate Creation: On which account, it seems not to have been so proper to appoint a Common Representative for them, since they were all actually in Being and capable of a Probation or Tryal of their Obedience in their own Persons.

2.) The

\* See the Impartial Enquiry, p. 94.



## PART

## II.

2.) The appointing of a Representative so peculiarly qualified as to his Person and Circumstances, had an evident Tendency to the Benefit of the Humane Species; whereas the appointing a Representative seems not to have been so well adapted to the Benefit of the Angels. For (if all of the same Species) there is no Necessity to suppose any one of them to have been better qualified for Obedience than the others, for as much as neither his natural Faculties nor his Circumstances can be made appear to have given him any peculiar Advantage. And if we suppose them to be of different Species, we can have no Reason to think it would have been more proper on that account, to have constituted either one or more Representatives.

3.) To have left Mankind to their particular Trials, would have been to expose them to too manifest a Danger, not only because they were probably the lowest or least perfect Species of Intelligent Creatures, but likewise because the far greater Part of them were to exist in such Times when the grateful Memory of the Creation was likely to wear off, and when Ignorance, Prejudice and evil Examples would be apt to set a wrong Byass on the Affections.

fections. But the Case of the Angels PART II.  
was very different. For (as far as we can judge) they were the noblest and most perfect of Creatures, and therefore the least liable so weakly and foolishly to rebel against their Maker. There was no Tempter as yet, and All of them were the immediate Off-spring of the Deity, and consequently, under the most sensible Obligations to Gratitude and Obedience. On all which Accounts, the Danger cannot be apprehended to have been so great as in the Case of Mankind.

Thus, I humbly conceive, it appears that the same Original Fitness which was founded on the necessary Relation between the Great Creator and his Intelligent Creatures, and which demonstrates the Necessity of his subjecting them to a Tryal of Obedience, serves likewise to demonstrate the Necessity of his subjecting both the Angelick Species to a Personal Trial, and the Humane Species to a Trial in a Representative: For as much as, in every Case, what is really most fit or conducive to the Attainment of his most Wise and Beneficent Ends, cannot but be necessary to the Supreme and most Perfect Being. Consequently, the Account which the *Christian Revelation*

**PART** *Revelation* gives of the Fall of Mankind in a Representative, is, in Reality, so far from invalidating it's Pretensions to the Authority of a Divine Revelation, that it strongly supports them.

Such who maintain that the Consequences of *Adam's* Disobedience were not only Temporal, but Spiritual and Eternal Death, suppose Spiritual Death to consist in a Moral Inability to all that is Good, and a Proneness to all that is Evil. This Spiritual Death, or Original Corruption, they conceive to have been propagated from the first of Mankind to all of merely Humane Race, and to be as the Root of every evil Thought, Word and Action, and of all other Evils both Temporal and Eternal.

But to explain this Propagation of the supposed Original Corruption, has been almost as great a Difficulty as to reconcile it to the Justice and Goodness of God.

Such of the more Ancient Fathers who held the Propagation of Original Sin or Corruption as a positive Quality inclining Men to Evil, held likewise, that the Souls of Men were Material and traduced or propagated from their Parents together with their Bodies :



dies: Upon which Foot, the Opin- PART  
 ion of the Propagation of Original II.  
 Corruption appeared to be defensible. ~~~~~

But after the Doctrine of the immediate Creation and Infusion of a pure Soul into the Body prevailed, the Defenders of that Opinion found themselves bewildered in inextricable Difficulties. Their Assertion was, That pure Souls became infected by a corrupt or infected Body, in the same manner as good Wine by a tainted Cask. But to explain how the Body could be infected with a Moral Contagion, or in what manner it could communicate it to the Soul, was such a Task, that St. *Austin* was obliged to confess, *that he could never find, either by Reading, Praying or Reasoning, how the Propagation of Original Sin could be defended on the Foot of the Creation of Souls* \*.

Some of the Moderns, on the contrary, conceiving Original Righteousness under the Notion of a Positive Quality inclining our first Parents to Good, suppose Original Sin to be propagated not as any thing Positive, but as a mere Privation; or in other Words, they

\* Nequè legendo, nequè orando, nequè ratiocinando invenire potui quomodo cum Animarum Creatione Peccatum Originis defendatur. *Epist. 157. ad Op-  
 tatum.*

**PART** they suppose the Corruption or Disorder of Humane Nature by the Fall to have proceeded merely from the Loss of Original Righteousness.

**II.**

But, according to this Account, the Pravity of *Adam's* Offence is not, properly speaking, propagated at all; only we are, by reason of his Offence, deprived of that supposed Original Righteousness which they imagine would have been as a Sort of Byass inclining us to Good. However, this they think as effectually explains the Matter as the Propagation or Conveyance of a positive evil Quality (had there been any such) could have done. For, say they, as a Stone suspended by a String, is by it's own Weight carried downwards, if the String be broken or loosed, merely through the Want of that which prevented it's falling; so our Souls (on account of the Sin of our First Parent) being deprived of Original Righteousness, are easily over-born by Temptations, and as it were, carried downwards to earthly Things.

But, with Submission, what Reason have we to admit of any other Notion of Original Righteousness than what consists in Innocence, and the regular Subjection of the Passions to Reason? What Necessity for supposing any Power

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er superadded to the natural Power of *Adam*? Will not the Supposition of such a superadded Power seem to imply, that Man at his Creation (though free from all evil Habits and vicious Inclinations) had not in his Nature a sufficient Power to attain the End of his Creation? But this would be a gross Impeachment of the Wisdom of his Creator. •

PART  
II.

Monfieur *Abbadie* frames another Hypothesis. He supposes, That the Organs of our First Parents Bodies were disordered by the first Rebellion of their Thoughts, and that this Disorder, being propagated to their natural Posterity, Sin, like a Leprosy, was propagated likewise, as proceeding from those disordered Organs. But his Hypothesis is contrary to Scripture in setting *Eve* on an equal Foot with *Adam*, by whom alone Sin (as a publick Evil) entred into the World. Besides, the supposed Disorder of our bodily Organs cannot be the Pravity of the Original Sin, though it may, perhaps, be conceived as the Occasion of Actual Sin. And though we should admit this Hypothesis to be more agreeable to Reason than either of the former; yet it may deserve to be considered, whether Experience discovers  
such



**PART** covers such a Total Depravation or Corruption of our Natures as is supposed.

**II.**

~~~~~ 'Tis not pretended, that any of our external Senses are either lost or much impaired by the Fall. Our Senses must therefore be owned to be capable of transmitting the same Ideas to the Understanding as those of *Adam* while he preserved his Integrity; and by Consequence, if we cannot at present judge rightly of some Things merely for want of sufficient Ideas, 'tis plain, the Case of Mankind, in that respect, was ever the same as now. And as for the Faculties of the Soul; our Judgments, though not always equally vigorous, are, for ought appears, still sufficiently capable of reflecting on the Ideas transmitted by the external Senses, and likewise of discerning and determining concerning the Agreement or Disagreement of any Ideas, whether received by Way of Sensation or Reflection. Our Wills, though often influenced by the Force of ungoverned Passions, excited by strong Impressions made by sensible Objects on our bodily Organs, have still a Liberty of Choosing; or (to speak in the Words of *St. Paul*) *To Will is still present with us*, and if (as the same inspir'd Writer expresses it) *we know not how to perform,*

perform (or if our Passions are not subservient to our most reasonable Choice) PART II.

this may be owing to vicious Habits of our own contracting, (by our being accustomed to do Evil, as the Scripture expresses it) and not to any supposed Disorder of our Bodily Organs derived from our Common Parents: as will be shewn.

There is yet another noted Hypothesis, viz. that of Father Mallebrance. He supposes a certain Disorder of our Nature (occasioned by the Fall) which consists in our Souls being deprived by God of the Power of effectually curbing the Motions of the Animal Spirits when excited by evil Objects; or in their being bereaved of that Dominion over the bodily Organs, which he conceives to have originally belonged to our Nature, and to be of absolute Necessity to break the Force, and prevent the Effects of Temptations. So that, according to this Opinion, God, as a Punishment for one Sin committed by a Representative, reduced Mankind to such a preternatural State as subjected them to a continual Necessity of sinning. But what is this less than to make the Most Holy God the Author of Sin?

'Tis confessed, that the Scriptures speak of a very great and general Dis-

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order

PART order and Corruption; but they no  
 I. where expressly derive it from the Pro-  
 pagation of Original Sin. By *Adam*,  
 'tis said, *Sin entred into the World, in*  
*him we were made Sinners*; and conse-  
 quently, *were conceived and born in Sin*;  
 and, *because we all have sinned, Death*  
*passes upon all*: But these Expressions  
 do not necessarily prove the Propagati-  
 on of Sin, but appear to import an  
 Imputation only. And if some Texts  
 seem to favour the Supposition of a to-  
 tal Incapacity to all that is Good (which  
 Incapacity may be conceived as the Ef-  
 fect of such Propagation) they may ei-  
 ther signify our entire Dependence on  
 the Divine Sustainment, by which our  
 very Beings are preserved, and with-  
 out which 'tis certain, we can do ne-  
 thing; or else they may be figurative  
 Expressions; the rather, because the  
 Scriptures (which on other Occasions  
 plainly assert our natural Powers) are  
 well known to abound with Figures,  
 in the present Case. Thus, when we  
 are said to be *dead in Trespasses and*  
*Sins*; when Sin is said to *live and reign*  
*in us*; and when it is represented as  
 a Person with a *Body* and Variety of  
*Members*, and is said to *dwell in us*, no-  
 thing can be more plain than that these  
 Expressions are figurative. And thus  
 when



when it is said, *that we can do nothing of ourselves; that there is none that doth good; that in us dwelleth no good Thing; that the Natural* (or rather the Sensual) *Man, cannot know the Things of God; that we are created in Christ Jesus to good Works,* and the like, 'tis reasonable to think these Expressions are also figurative. For no Wonder if he that is sometimes said to be dead, is at other times represented as incapable of Acting, or if he that is said to be possessed by Sin, is by the same Figure described as void of all Good, or if the Divine Concourse towards the exciting and confirming good Inclinations in us, be represented as a new Creation.

In like manner, when *Christ* says, *He came to seek and to save that which was lost;* this is plainly an Allusion to lost or strayed Sheep, and imports only the very general Deviation of Mankind, before *Christ's* Appearance, from the Paths of Vertue. And when the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Ephesians* says, *We were by Nature Children of Wrath even as others;* the plain Meaning is, that in the State of Nature (*i. e.* before they received the Grace to believe and submit to the Laws of *Christ*) they followed the same vicious Courses,

PART and were on that account equally obnoxious to the Effects of the Divine Displeasure with others of the degenerate Race of Men: For this is what is imported by the *Hebraism, Children of Wrath*. And Lastly, When Job puts the Questions, *Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? And, What is Man that he should be clean, and he which is born of a Woman that he should be righteous?* These Expressions, which in a figurative Sense, speak of Actual Sin or Unrighteousness under the Notion of *Uncleanness*, may only signify, that the Passions, which (as far as they depend on the Body) may be said to be derived from our immediate Parents, cannot but be subject to receive and communicate a wrong Bias to the Actions, and so to render sinless Perfection in Effect impossible in this corrupt State of the World.

That the Propensity of Men to Evil, and their Aversion to that which is Good (which even those figurative Expressions cannot but import to be very great and general) may be accounted for without supposing any Propagation of Original Sin or Moral Disorder will perhaps, appear from the following Remarks.

Though

Though the Charms of Virtue are real, yet they are chiefly to be discern-  
ed by an intellectual Eye: Whereas the false Allurements of Vice are obvi-  
ous to Sense, and for that Reason, are  
apt to make earlier and deeper Impres-  
sions. 'Tis not, ordinarily, without the  
Advantages of a good Education, and  
the serious Exercise of Reason, that  
we come to discern the Beauties, and,  
in any Degree, to submit to the Domi-  
nion of Virtue: But Vice by its agree-  
able Attacks upon our outward Senses,  
prevails very early and strongly on the  
Principle of Self-love, which is as the  
Root of all the other Passions, and  
thus almost forces itself upon us under  
the specious Disguise of Good. By  
which Means, evil Habits very often  
take Possession of us insensibly before  
we come to the due Exercise of Rea-  
son, and by Degrees impress so strong  
a Byass on the Passions, that, even af-  
terwards, when we come to discern our  
Mistakes, we may say, with *Medea*,

*Video Meliora proboque,  
Deteriora Sequor.*

Thus the irregular Inclinations of  
Children (which some imagine to spring  
immediately from the Root of original  
Corruption)



**PART** Corruption ) seem to be no other  
**II.** than the Motions of that Self-love,  
 which was originally implanted in  
 us, for our Benefit, by the Great  
 Author of Nature. For even this natural, and therefore innocent, Principle (through their unavoidable want of a due Notion of Right and Wrong) is apt to break out into petty Irregularities. And as for the viler Actions of Persons of riper Years, they seem to spring from the same Principle of Self-love, either not rightly understood, or else perverted by evil Habits. For as a Child, moved by the Principle of Self-love, takes away a Trifle, not knowing that it is an Invasion of another's Property, or hates his Tutor, through the influence of the same Principle, for obliging him to do what he imagines (though falsely) to be inconsistent with his Interest; so a Robber, moved by the very same Principle, takes what belongs to another, and perhaps deprives him of Life; and all from a false Notion of Interest. And such Practices may, in time, produce such an Habit as shall seem like a second Nature.

But whatever may be the Principle of evil Actions, it is to be confessed that the Divine Concourse or Assistance must be supposed to contribute to every  
 Good


Good Action: But then this doth not PART II.  
 exclude, but rather corroborates, the  
 Supposition of our being possess'd of  
 our natural Powers. Of the Reason  
 of this Divine Assistance we have treat-  
 ed already.

But this may be sufficient to justify  
 the *Christian Revelation* in Teaching  
 the Imputation of Original Sin, and  
 to vindicate it from the Charge of fa-  
 vouring the Opinion of it's Propa-  
 gation.

#### SECT. IX.

THE *Resurrection of the same Body*,  
 is another Article of the *Christian Re-  
 velation*, of which I shall undertake to  
 shew the Reasonableness. And this I  
 shall do, both by proving the Useful-  
 ness of the Doctrine, and likewise the  
 Fitness and Possibility of the Thing.

Before the Appearance of the *Chri-  
 stian Revelation* in the World, some of  
 the wisest Philosophers expressed them-  
 selves, at times, somewhat dubiously  
 concerning the natural Immortality of  
 the Humane Soul, and a future State  
 of Retribution; and even a whole Sect  
 among the *Jews* (*viz.* the *Sadducees*)  
 denied Both. But the Revelation of  
*Christ*, not only establishes the Soul's  
 Immortality, but puts the Doctrine of a

**PART** future State of Retribution farther out  
**II.** of Doubt, by asserting the Resurrecti-  
 on of the Body more clearly and expli-  
 citely than the *Jewish Revelation* had  
 done. For though the Belief of the  
 Soul's Immortality is sufficient to an-  
 swer all the Ends of Religion, yet we  
 find that not only among the Vulgar,  
 but even among the Pretenders to Phi-  
 losophy, there have been, and still are,  
 some People of gross Apprehensions  
 who cannot easily be persuaded that an  
 Immaterial Soul can either perceive or  
 act any Thing in a State of Separation  
 from it's Body. The Revelation there-  
 fore of this Doctrine of a Resurrection,  
 superadded to that of the Soul's Immor-  
 tality, must be allowed to have been of  
 great Use to give Satisfaction to this  
 Sort of Men, who must otherwise  
 have still doubted of a future Retribu-  
 tion. And was it only on this account,  
 the ordaining and revealing a Resur-  
 rection of the Body was certainly most  
 worthy of the Wisdom of God.

The Reasons which may be assigned  
 for the Fitness of the Thing (chiefly  
 with regard to Good Men) are the fol-  
 lowing :

- 1.) Bodily Death being one of the  
 Consequences of the Fall, and *Christ*  
 being sent to make sufficient, and even  
 abundant



abundant Reparation for all the Evils PART  
 occasioned by the Fall, it was very fit III  
 that he should bring about the Resur- ~  
 rection of the Body.

2.) The strong Inclination of the Soul to continue in the State of Union (notwithstanding the many Diseases and Inconveniences that attend it) proves a State of Separation from the Body not to be a Natural, but a Violent State, and therefore not to be ultimately designed by the Author of Nature.

3.) The Soul being originally designed to inhabit a Body, may well be thought to have, even in the separate State, a strong Propension towards Re-union; which Propension, being natural, we may reasonably suppose will not be frustrated.

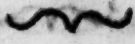
4.) Yet since these gross and unwieldy Bodies of ours may be thought, in some sort to hinder, rather than promote the Action of their Spiritual Inhabitants, therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose (in Consistence with the *Christian Revelation*) that the Body at the Time of it's Re-union will be rendered a more convenient Habitation for the Soul.

The Three last Reasons, I conceive, are such as would dispose Men to believe the Resurrection, tho'  
 it

**PART** it had never been any Part of a Divine  
**II.** Revelation. For even some of the wiser  
 ~~~~~ Heathens (convinced by these or the  
 like Arguments) appear to have had  
 some Notion of it.

Tho' such who have suffered their  
 Reason to be debauched to the Disser-  
 vice of Religion, have ever struck  
 chiefly at the Belief of a future State,  
 and therefore have made their strong-  
 est Efforts against the Immortality of  
 the Soul and the Resurrection of the  
 Body; yet I cannot perceive that they  
 have been able to find above one plau-  
 sible Objection against the Possibility  
 of the Resurrection. The Objection is  
 grounded on the Supposition of one  
 Body's contributing to the Nourish-  
 ment of another, and becoming Part  
 of it's Substance; from whence 'tis in-  
 ferred, that the same Parts, belonging  
 to two Bodies, cannot, without a Con-  
 tradiction, be affirmed capable of being  
 restored to both.

But this Knot is not difficult to  
 untie. For though we should sup-  
 pose (as we have no Necessity to do)  
 that all the grosser Parts of our Bodies  
 shall be raised, yet 'tis certain, that as  
 God, being Omniscient, cannot but  
 know all the Parts of which our Bodies  
 consist, so being likewise Omnipotent,  
 He

He cannot want the Means both to pre- PART  
vent the Confusion of the Parts of dif- II.  
ferent Bodies, and to re-unite those of   
the same Body.

But, possibly, the Resurrection of  
the same Body may be accounted for  
in a Philosophical Way, without sup-  
posing any extraordinary Interposition  
of the Divine Providence to prevent  
such a Confusion of Bodies.

For, as in every Seed there is con-  
tained a certain minute Part, which  
(as appears from Microscopical Obser-  
vations) is the entire future Plant in  
Miniature, and the immediate Seat of  
that spiritous Substance to be found in  
all Seeds, and which, when the other  
Parts of the Seed are corrupted, increases  
and displays itself by Degrees, so this  
gross Body of ours (like the groffer Part  
of a Seed) is probably but as the Husk,  
or Shell, or Case of some very minute  
Principle, which cannot either receive  
Nourishment itself, or become Nou-  
rishment to any other such Principle,  
and which (probably with some addi-  
tional Particles of the groffer Body)  
will discover itself in it's proper Form  
at the Resurrection.

This is no merely imaginary Scheme,  
but appears to be the Doctrine of St.  
*Paul*, who compares the Resurrection  
of



PART of the Body to the raising of a Plant

II. from a Seed. From whence it may, with Reason be inferred, that as the Seed (though usually, but improperly, said to come up or rise again) is not raised with all the same Substance, or in the very same Form as when sown, but the Body of the new Plant, which was contained in it, is chiefly that which is raised; so those grosser Parts, which we call the Humane Body, may not be all raised at the Resurrection, but that minute Part (which is most properly the Humane Body, as being the immediate Habitation or Seat of the Soul) may be chiefly that which shall then be raised.

This Body, on account of its Subtlety, may deserve the Denomination of a *Spiritual Body*, and may be supposed to resemble those *Etherial Vehicles* with which the *Platonists* were wont to accommodate Incorporeal Beings. Nor can it well be conceived, that the highest Perfection of Humane Souls in a better World should consist in their being eternally link'd to Bodies of Flesh and Blood; Bodies, of which the wisest of the Philosophers have complained as of Prisons or living Sepulchres of the Soul. Agreeably to which, the Scripture says, *We that are in this Tabernacle*

bernacle (or Body) do groan, being bur-  
thened, not for that we would be un-  
cloathed, (or stripp'd of all Body) but  
so cloathed upon as Mortality may be  
swallowed up of Life.

PART  
II.

SECT. X.

THE Doctrine of *Eternal Punish-  
ment* (though not peculiar to the *Jew-  
ish* and *Christian Revelations*, but taught  
even by the *Pagans* in certain Cases)  
has likewise been made the Subject of  
Debate.

'Tis indeed both Unreasonable and  
Unscriptural to assert, in a proper Sense,  
that the most Beneficent of Beings, the  
Common Father of Mankind, takes  
Pleasure in the Misery even of his Diso-  
bedient Off-spring. If therefore some  
Men of more Zeal than either Learn-  
ing or Prudence, have explained any  
of the figurative Expressions of the  
Scriptures relating to *Eternal Punish-  
ment* in such a Sense, they must be  
owned to have given just Cause of  
Offence.

*Origen*, on the contrary, and some  
others have not only looked upon the  
Descriptions of the future State of Pu-  
nishment in the Scriptures to be (as  
they certainly are) figurative, but have  
been inclined to believe, that the  
Words

**PART II.** Words which are understood to signify it's eternal Duration ought to be taken in a limited Sense, as importing only a long Term of Time. But since the Duration of the State of Misery is expressed by the very same Words which are used to denote the Eternity of the State of Happiness, 'tis sufficiently clear, that the same unlimited Duration is meant in both Cases.

Others (being zealous for what they conceived to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures) have attempted to assign Reasons for the immediate inflicting of *Positive* Punishments to Eternity. These Reasons we shall briefly consider. But it will be proper to premise Two Things.


1.) That we have a true Notion of Justice or Equity, may be inferred from the Appeal which the Great God is represented as making in the Scriptures even to sinful Men, inviting them to judge, as it were, of the Equity of his Proceedings, and the Iniquity of their own: *Are not my Ways equal, are not yours unequal?* &c.

2.) Our Notion of strict Justice or Equity with regard to Punishment, is, that it consists in duly proportioning the Punishment to the Demerit of the Crime, not only as to the Kind and

Degree,



Degree, but likewise as to the Du- PART  
II  
ration.

The mentioned Reasons of Eternal   
Positive Punishment are as follows:

1.) Some have informed us, that the chief Reason of such Positive (as well as Negative) Eternal Punishment, i. e. of an Infinite Punishment both of *Loss* and of *Sense* (as they express it) is to be derived from the absolutely Infinite Guilt or Demerit of Sin; which Infinite Guilt they conceive to proceed from it's being committed against an Absolutely Infinite Object, and therefore to require an absolutely Infinite Punishment: Which Punishment, since it cannot, at once, be inflicted on the Offender (as being but a Finite Subject) they therefore conceive it just that he should suffer not only most exquisite but eternal Misery, to make up his Want of Capacity by the Duration of his Punishment. But certainly this cannot be any Reason, much less the chief Reason, of positive eternal Punishment; because it infers a *Stoical* Equality of Sins, and contradicts the Scripture by excluding the Supposition of different Degrees of Guilt and Misery. For 'tis evident that there can be no different Degrees of Guilt in Crimes that are alike Infinite.

2.) Some

PART

H.



2.) Some attempt to prove the Equity of the immediate inflicting of positive Punishment to Eternity from the continual or eternal Provocations of the miserable Sinner; who being continually offending, ought, say they, to be thus continually suffering. Yet neither can this be admitted as the Reason of such eternal Punishment. For eternal Suffering in the future State is threatened as the just Consequence of Sins committed on Earth, without any reference to Crimes that may be committed hereafter.

3.) Others tell us, that God does no Injustice to the Wicked by thus punishing them everlastingly, because 'tis the Effect of their own Choice; everlasting Happiness and Misery having been set before them, and they having rejected the one and chosen the other. But this Method of Reasoning (in the present Case) supposes the very Thing in Debate, it remaining to be proved that either Scripture or Reason reaches any such Positive eternal Misery as is here supposed to be set before Men. Besides, since the Connection between Vice and Misery, is not apparent to every one, consequently, every Man that chooses Vice cannot be properly said to choose Misery.

4.) Nor

4.) Nor is it sufficient to say, with **PART II.** others, that the immediate inflicting of continual positive Punishment to Eternity is therefore just, because if Sinners had lived eternally on Earth, they would have sinned eternally. For admitting this Supposition to be true (which yet may be disputed) 'tis however hard to conceive the Equity of punishing Men in any manner for Sins they never committed, merely because they would have eventually committed them, had they continued in a Capacity so to do. This is to imagine that God renders to Sinners, not according to their Works (as the Scripture says he will) but according to his own Fore-knowledge.

5.) Nor can it avail to alledge, that some Sins, though committed in an Instant, are Eternal (because irreparable) Injuries; such as Murder, Adultery, &c. For (besides\* that this Reasoning regards only some particular Sins) it may be said, that the Irreparableness, of these Injuries in itself considered, is so far from inferring the Justice of the continual inflicting of Positive Punishment for them to Eternity, that it will not (alone) infer the Justice even of eternal Negative Punishment: For as much as the irreparable Loss or Forfeiture



PART feiture of the Eternal or Heavenly  
 H. Felicity must be allowed to be far greater than the irreparable Loss of any Temporal Good, proceeding from the mentioned Injuries.

It seems then, that the Opinion of the Eternity of Positive Punishment has no solid Foundation in Reason. Let us therefore consider what is the true *Christian Doctrine* concerning Eternal Punishment.

If we carefully reflect, we shall perhaps see Reason to conclude, as follows:

1.) 'Tis undeniable, that the Great Creator may justly exclude those from Happiness even for ever, who act contrary to their natural Obligations, either by not using, or abusing their natural Powers, with the due Exercise of which their Supreme Happiness was connected.

2.) Exclusion from Happiness cannot but produce a great Degree of Regret; which is Positive Misery, though occasioned by somewhat purely Negative.

3.) The Scripture Descriptions of the Punishment and Misery, as well as of the Happiness of the future State, are couched in figurative Terms, which excite Ideas, probably very different from the Truth of the Things.

4.) Such

4.) Such of those figurative Descriptions of the Misery of the future State of Punishment as are expressed even in the most positive Terms, (uch as *everlasting Fire, the Worm that never dieth,* and the like) may, perhaps, not without Reason, be understood, to signify that endless Regret which cannot but result from the Loss of the greatest Happiness, and the Despair of attaining it.

5.) Where Regret and Despair are in a great Degree, there the Torment cannot but be very exquisite. For this is what we may call the Pain of the Soul, which those who have experienced it, though in less Degrees, have thought to be more intolerable than all bodily Pains.

6.) The Powers or Faculties of the Soul in the future State, being freed from the Clog of a gross Body, may well be supposed to be more active and vigorous, and more susceptible both of Pain and Pleasure; and therefore the Regret and Torment proceeding from the Loss and Despair of the Heavenly Felicity, may be conceived not to wear off, but to be (like a Fire) continually fed by the Fewel of sad Reflection for ever. And this Reflection and Regret we have Reason to believe will be more or less excited by some positive Act of



PART the offended Deity, which may be  
 II. meant by the Breath of the Lord kindling the Fire of *Tophet*.

7.) Though the immediate inflicting of positive Punishment in the future State may be thought necessary to be supposed in order to account for the different Degrees of Misery which the Scripture teaches; yet there is perhaps no Necessity to think that such Punishment will be continually inflicted to Eternity; for as much as the Negative Punishment of *Loss* (as was shewn) as well answers the Idea of a continual unquenchable Fire, as such a continual and eternal Positive Punishment of *Sense*.

8.) 'Tis reasonable to conclude, that, as after the Forfeiture of the earthly Paradise by our Common Parents, they were, on account of their Personal Offence, not only deprived of the Happiness it yielded, but were likewise justly subjected, more or less, to additional Sufferings and Distresses; so not only an Exclusion from Happiness, but a Subjection of the miserable Objects of the Divine Displeasure, in the future State, to such positive Penalties as are proportioned to the different Demerits of their respective Personal Crimes, may be supposed to consist with the strictest Equity.

SECT.



## SECT. XI.

PART  
II.

WHAT has been observed, may, 'tis hoped, be sufficient to demonstrate the Reasonableness of the most Essential *Doctrines of Christianity*: We shall now proceed to consider it's *Precepts or Laws*.


The *Precepts* contained in the *Christian Revelation* are either such as are Natural, fixed and unalterable, as being immediately founded on the Immutable Nature of God, and the necessary Relation between Him and his Creatures; or else they are such as are Positive and Alterable, as being founded on the free Determination of God. In respect of the former, 'tis agreed, that the Preceptive Part of *Christianity* may be regarded as a complete Collection and perfect Explication of the Laws of Nature. In regard to the latter, it will appear, that the *Precepts of Christianity* are to be considered either as so many Supplements to those natural Laws, or as Helps to the obeying them.

Before we proceed to a particular Consideration of the Positive *Precepts of Christianity*, it may not be unnecessary to enquire into the Reasons which may modestly be supposed to have been sufficient to incline the Beneficent Deity to subject Men to any other Laws

**PART** besides the Natural Laws or Dictates  
**II.** of Reason: The rather because such  
 other Laws, producing a sort of En-  
 largement of our Obligations, cannot  
 but render the Practice of Religion  
 more difficult than when restrained to  
 those few general Acts to which Na-  
 ture and Reason oblige us, and by Con-  
 sequence, seem to expose our Supreme  
 Happiness to a greater Hazard and  
 Uncertainty.

To this End it will be proper to re-  
 mark, that our Obligations by the Laws  
 of Nature or Reason, and by such Insti-  
 tutions as are superadded by Positive  
 Precepts, are very different: Our Obli-  
 gation by the Former being (as was  
 observed) founded on the Nature of  
 God and ourselves, and the necessary  
 Relation between Him and us, which  
 renders the Matter of them necessarily  
 Good; whereas our Obligation by the  
 Latter (*viz.* by Positive Precepts) is  
 founded on the free Pleasure of God  
 commanding Things which had no  
 Moral Goodness in themselves, but  
 were of an indifferent Nature.

From hence it seems not unreasona-  
 ble to conclude, that though the Pe-  
 nalty in Case of the Violation of a Na-  
 tural Law ought to be most severe, yet  
 the Penalty annexed to the Transgres-  
 sion of a Positive Precept may be less  
 in

in a due Proportion to the Importance PART  
of the Precept. That it was actually II.  
so with regard to the positive Precepts   
of the *Jewish* Law, seems sufficiently  
clear. The Ceremonial Precepts of the  
*Mosaical Institution*, are well known to  
have been very numerous and burthen-  
some; in so much, that it was next to  
impossible for the utmost Diligence to  
avoid very frequent Transgressions.  
Yet notwithstanding this, the Prescrip-  
tion of those Laws or Precepts appears  
to have been very consistent with the  
Wisdom and Goodness of God. For  
by their Means the Supreme Happi-  
ness of *Abraham's* Posterity was capable  
of being promoted, but not hazarded;  
for as much as the Performance of the  
Duties required by them tended at that  
Time to several good Ends, and the  
Legal Guilt contracted by their Trans-  
gression admitted of a Real Expiation  
by the Means of other Observances of  
the same Nature, consisting in divers  
Sorts of Purifications, for the most Part,  
of little Expence and Trouble \*. For  
though the Transgression even of those  
positive Ceremonial Precepts may be  
said to have been attended with Cir-  
cumstances which may be reputed to  
have been Violations of the Natural  
Law, and by Consequence, to have  
L 4
produced

\* See Heb. ix. ver. 12.



PART produced not only what is called Legal  
 II. but likewise Moral Guilt; yet since  
 those Circumstances were considered as  
 merely accidental to the Act, the Penalty was notwithstanding proportioned only to the End and Design of the positive Law, of which the Act was a Transgression.

What has been observed of the positive Precepts of the *Jewish Revelation*, may, perhaps, be applied to divers of those Institutions which are peculiar to *Christianity*, as being of much the same Nature. For Instance, the *Christian Sacraments* (taken for the Outward and Visible Signs) though they are enjoined as having a Tendency to our Spiritual Welfare; yet they do not appear to have a necessary Connection with our Supreme Happiness. Accordingly we find the Penalty in Case of the mere Abuse or Misperformance of one of them, abstracting from the real Contempt of it, is (at least according to the Sense of the Original) no other than *Judgment*, viz. either Sickness or a more sudden Death: For thus the Great Apostle himself explains it: *For this Cause* (says he) *many are sick among you, and some sleep.* And the Reason of this seems sufficiently clear. For in judging of the different Demerit of an Offence, we are not to consider it in it's  
 general

general Notion, or as a Violation of the PART  
Divine Authority (for in that respect II.  
all Sins are equal, being equally Viola-  
tions of the same Authority) but in it's  
particular Notion, or with relation to  
the Nature and End of that Law and  
Precept of which it is a Transgression.  
Accordingly, that Offence must have  
the greatest Demerit or Guilt which is  
committed against a Law which both  
is, and is known to be, of the greatest  
Importance either in itself, or in rela-  
tion to the End or Design of the Great  
Lawgiver. But as we are not compe-  
tent Judges, in every Case, of the Ends  
which God may have proposed in enac-  
ting positive Laws, so neither are we  
obliged particularly to enquire into  
them. Yet if the End of God in enac-  
ting any particular positive Law be re-  
vealed to be of great Importance, the  
wilful Violation of it cannot but have  
a proportionably greater Demerit. But  
since both the Matter and End of posi-  
tive Laws (or such as proceed from the  
mere good Pleasure of God) are, in the  
general, known to be of less Importance  
than those of natural Laws (or such as  
are founded on his very Nature) their  
Penalties must, it seems, in the general,  
be supposed less severe than the Penal-  
ties annexed to the Laws of Nature.

As for that Fundamental Duty of  
*Faith,*

PART *Faith*, which was required in the Di-

II. vine Commission of *Moses*, 'tis certain, that as it was almost impossible to apprehend that it should fail of being performed (by such at least who were either Eye-witnesses or otherwise well-inform'd of his Miracles) so it was the necessary Means of Obedience to the Revelation he made of the Divine Will: On both which Accounts it was very consistent with the Wisdom of God not only to require it, but to punish the Want of it in *Korah* and his Associates (as likewise in others) with the severest Temporal Calamity, even a violent Death: For there is no Necessity, perhaps, to suppose that their Punishment extended to Eternal Perdition purely on account of some Degree of Unbelief with regard to the Commission of *Moses*.

The Faith which the *Christian Revelation* requires in it's Great Revealer is indeed of a very different Kind. For this is represented as having a necessary Connection with our Chief Happiness, and is therefore required on Eternal Penalties; of such, at least, who have Capacities and Opportunities to satisfy themselves of the Truth of his Pretensions. But then this Faith is to be considered not only as the necessary Means of our Obedience to that Revelation,



Revelation, or as a mere Belief of the Revealer's Veracity, but likewise as importing our Acceptance of Him for our Supreme Lord; an Act to which we were antecedently obliged by the very Law of Nature, on Supposition that his Real Divinity was discoverable by us. In this Case, *He that believeth not is condemned already, viz. by the Law of Nature.*

PART  
II.

Though the positive Precepts of *Revealed Religion*, or it's Laws with regard to Things which were, in themselves, neither Morally Good nor Evil, but Indifferent, are not the necessary Means of attaining our Chief Happiness (and are therefore, as it seems, not enforced by Eternal Penalties) yet they either have or have had questionless very valuable Ends. For Example:

1.) They sometimes serve for Instruction. Thus the Ritual Precepts of the *Jewish Revelation* which relate to Clean and Unclean Animals, are very reasonably supposed to have Moral Significations, and to have been as so many constant Monitors with regard to Practice. Such a Method of Teaching was very suitable to the State of the *Jewish Nation* at that Time, and much resembled the Custom of the ancient Sages, who were wont to teach by Parables and Allegories, and to extract Moral Lessons from

PART from the natural Properties of Animals  
II. and Vegetables.

2.) They might serve for the Representation or Commemoration of important Events, and for the Conveyance of Spiritual Benefits. Thus the *Jewish Sabbath* and *Passover*, were instituted in Memory of the Creation of the World and the Destruction of the First-born in *Egypt*: And divers of the *Jewish Rites* and Ceremonies were plainly Typical Representations of future Things. And thus the *Christian Sacraments* are Signs and Seals of Spiritual Benefits, and Obligations or Ingagements to the Performance of the greater Duties of Religion.

3.) For Delight. Men are usually taken with External Pomp and Ceremony. Therefore we need not wonder if the Deity, in this as well as in other Cases, condescended to accommodate his Institutions to the innocent Weaknesses of Humane Nature. Of this Sort were divers Rites of the *Mosaic Law*.

4.) For Amusement. The *Jews* were a People too much inclined to imitate the Customs of the neighbouring Nations. To prevent which, it was convenient to keep them employed in such innocent Rites and Ceremonies at home, as might afford them but little  
Leisure

Leisure to enquire into or adopt the PART  
evil Customs of the vicious and idola- II.  
trous *Pagans*.

5.) For Distinction. Such an Institution was *Circumcision*; by the means of which the *Israelitish* Nation was most effectually distinguished, and separated from the Conversation and Contagion of the Uncircumcised Idolaters.

## SECT. XII.

BESIDES a most complete Collection and perfect Explanation of the Laws of Nature, enforced by the most powerful Motives (and particularly, as we have already observed, by a much clearer Discovery not only of the Evil of Sin, but of the Mercy and Justice of God, and of a future State than either the *Jewish Revelation* or unassisted Reason ever made) *Christianity* hath given us the following Supplements to those Natural Laws.

*First*, As to the Duties of *Praise* and *Prayer*, *Christianity* instructs and obliges us to exercise both through the Intercession of a *Mediator*. In this indeed the *Christian* and the *Jewish Revelations* agree. In the Latter the High Priest is represented as mediating between God and the People of *Israel*: In the Former we are directed to *Christ* as the only Mediator between God and  
Man



**PART** Man. But, whereas the Mediatorship  
**H** of the *Jewish* High Priest was chiefly  
 typical, that of *Christ* is real, and  
 grounded on his own Satisfaction for  
 the Sins of Men.

The Reason of this Institution appears to be as follows. By their Disobedience Men daily offended the Just Governour of the World, deserving that neither their Praises should be accepted nor their Prayers regarded. And though Repentance may in this Case seem to have been a sufficient Remedy, yet (for the more effectual discovering of the Evil of Disobedience, and the more powerful promoting of the Practice of Obedience by a signal Display both of his Justice and Mercy, as well as for other mentioned Ends peculiar to the Case of fallen and degenerate Mankind) God, to whom whatever is fittest with regard to the Attainment of his Ends, in due Consistence with our natural Powers, is always necessary, insisted on a proper Satisfaction: Which Satisfaction being given by *Christ*, He became our only Intercessor with God. For being the Author of that Satisfaction or Expiation by which the Ends of the Divine Government were most effectually promoted, he could not but be the fittest Person to plead the Merits of it. Thus tho' Reason could  
 not

not discover these Things, yet when discovered, it cannot but approve of them.

PART  
II.

Again, The Duty of *Faith* in this only Mediator and Intercessor, as being the promised *Messias* and Saviour of the World, is, in some respect, another Supplement to the Law of Nature. For this is the Duty which the *Christian Revelation* superadds to the natural Duty of Repentance, as a Condition to qualify such, at least, who have the Means of Believing, for an Interest in the Merits of the Mediator's Satisfaction. And the Reason is clear. For such Faith is to be considered as the Fountain from whence our Obedience to the Doctrines and Institutions of our Great Mediator and Lawgiver naturally flows.

'Tis confessed, that (as we elsewhere observed) we could not, without an extraordinary Revelation, have discovered any other Means of appeasing the too often offended Deity but Repentance and Amendment only. The Custom of *Sacrificing* may seem indeed to argue it to have been the general Opinion that the Deity was to be rendered propitious by that Means. But it ever appeared to the Thinking Part of Mankind to be an Imagination no less absurd than groundless, to suppose that the Blood of Beasts should be accepted as an Equivalent for the Sins of Men.

And

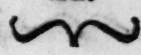


**PART II.** And perhaps no more probable Account can be given of the Custom of Sacrificing, than that it was first derived from Revelation (as being typical of *Christ's* Satisfaction) and afterwards greedily retained by the *Pagan* Priests; who finding it profitable, represented it as the necessary Means of atoning for Sin. For that Sacrifices were used, in the Time of the *Mosaick* Institution, as visible Representations of the Demerit of Sin, and as Types of the future Sacrifice of the Redeemer, none, I think, can doubt, who believes the Epistle to the *Hebrews* to be a Part of the *Christian Revelation*. This Sacrifice of the Redeemer is therefore justly represented to be the only Propitiation for Sin, and Faith and Repentance are most fitly required as the Conditions to qualify for an Interest therein.

Another Supplement to the Law of Nature, seems to have been made by the *Christian Revelation* with regard to the natural Duty of *Patience*.

Tho' an humble or submissive Temper of Mind with respect to God in the Course of his Providence, is a Duty easily demonstrated by unassisted Reason, (as we observed in the former Part) yet Humility or Submission with regard to Evils or Injuries received from Men, was so far from being admitted by the *Pagans*



*Pagans* as Reasonable or a Duty, that PART  
 it was generally reputed the Effect of II.  
 a mean and abject Spirit. For it seems,   
 they thought submitting to the righteous Will of God to be sufficiently consistent with resisting the unjust Will of Man. Yet Patience even under Injuries done us by Men, is represented by the *Christian Revelation* as a Duty very acceptable to God, and as a fit Prerequisite to our Exaltation. But though this appears to be required for a very wise and beneficial End, viz. for the more effectual preserving of Peace in the World, yet perhaps it could not have been made appear to be a Duty by the Exercise of Reason only. For Self-preservation and Self-defence are, in some Cases, at least, undoubted Principles of the Law of Nature; and Revenge or Retaliation of Injuries, may be speciously enough extenuated in every Case, as an Act of Justice, and accordingly, by *Aristotle* and *Cicero* 'tis ranked among the Vertues. If any of those who had no other Guide than the pure Light of Nature did, notwithstanding, practice the not-retaliating Injuries, yet who even among the Wise and Best of the Heathens ever extended the Duty of Patience so far as to think themselves obliged to *blest those who cursed them, and to pray for them*  
 M them

PART *them who despitefully used and persecuted*  
 II. *them?* Yet even this is enjoyned us  
 by an expresse Precept of the Law of  
*Christ.*

But this *Christian* Notion of *Pati-*  
*ence*, how extensive soever, is not per-  
 haps unlimited, as some may imagine.  
 To make this appear, it may be confi-  
 dered, that Injuries are either Publick  
 or Private. Private Injuries (or such  
 as immediately regard Private Persons)  
 are either such as have no considerable  
 Tendency to the Publick Damage, and  
 therefore need no Cognizance of the  
 Legislature; or else they are such, as,  
 on account of their more direct Ten-  
 dency to the Hurt of the Communi-  
 ty, come within the Reach of Publick  
 Laws. Those of the latter Sort may  
 even according to the *Christian Reve-*  
*lation*, be retaliated by the Magistrate  
 or publick Minister of Justice; though  
 some contend that neither Sort may  
 be retaliated by private Persons. But  
 as for Publick Injuries (or such as im-  
 mediately regard the Community) they  
 appear to be of a very different Nature.  
 For tho' a Private Person may be con-  
 ceived to be obliged to recede from his  
 own Right even of Defending himself,  
 in some Cases, with a View to the Pub-  
 lick Good, by a Revelation that is Di-  
 vine, yet it cannot well be imagin'd that

a Man of a publick Character should be PART II.  
 obliged by a Revelation that proceeds from God, tamely to give up the Rights of the Publick with which he is entrusted. A well-regulated Government is the common Natural Right of Mankind, and indeed, in some respect, the greatest of Temporal Blessings; it being that which secures to us the Possession and Enjoyment of all other Blessings. Therefore for a Person in a Publick Capacity to contribute to the giving up what is the Common Right, and the Greatest Temporal Good by patiently suffering such Injuries as are destructive of it, is in Effect to do the greatest Injury and Mischief. But to ordain the greatest of Temporal Mischiefs and Injuries by a merely Arbitrary Law, cannot be the Design of a Revelation that is worthy of God: Nor can it be made appear to have been the Design of the *Christian Revelation*.

As *Patience* or a submissive Temper of Mind, is the greatest Proof of our Belief of the Divine Sovereignty and Providence; so the *Christian Revelation* not only yields the most perfect Precepts and the strongest Motives to the Exercise, but furnishes us with the Brightest Example of it. And in this latter respect, especially, *Christianity* has, without Dispute, a just Preferenece



PART to all other Institutions. For by proposing to our Imitation the Example of a Person whose Conduct represented one continued Scene of Meekness and Patience, it supplies us with the surest Guide of our Practice under the Injuries and Calamities of Life. Tho' indeed such Rules for the Exercise of this Duty of *Patience* as may be formed either from our Saviour's own Conduct or that of his Apostles, appear to concern us only as Persons in a private Capacity (for such a Person was our Saviour himself, in some Sense, when on Earth, *whose Kingdom was not of this World*) not as publick Persons, or as Persons to whose Care the Common Rights are committed, and whose Conduct has a direct Influence on the Wellfare or Damage of the Community.

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